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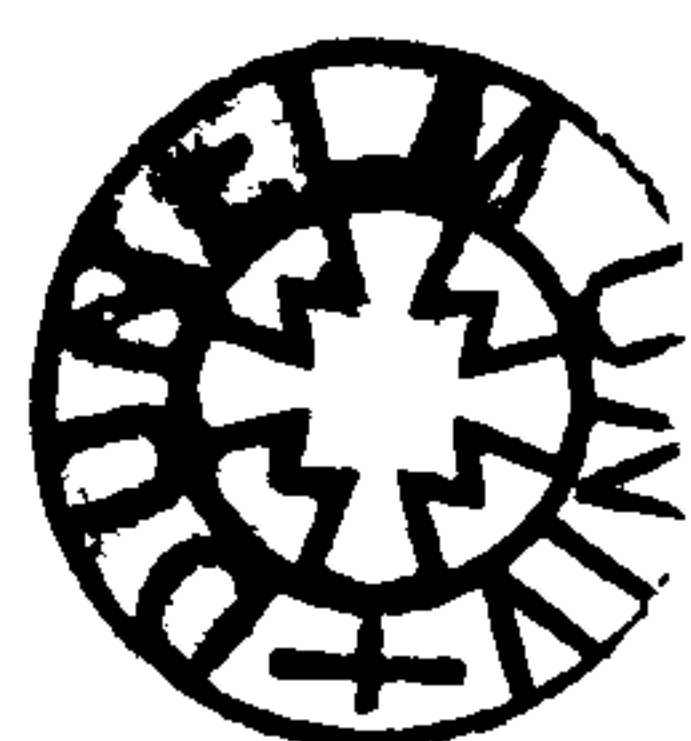
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TRADITION AND THEOLOGY IN JOHN CASSIAN

Augustine Michael Courtney Casiday

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25 JUN 2002

Augustine M. C. Casiday
'Tradition and theology in John Cassian'
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The works of John Cassian are typically read as monastic, rather than theological, material. (His sole dogmatic treatise, *On the incarnation*, is invariably dismissed as derivative and marginally interesting at best.) This reflects an ancient view of Cassian that is bound up with concern that he was a 'semi-Pelagian' and therefore of doubtful orthodoxy. The present thesis undertakes a fresh analysis of Cassian's theological competence. It follows the classic debate by centring chiefly on his explanation of grace and salvation. It seeks to incorporate the significant advances that have been made in our understanding of Cassian as a monastic author into a reappraisal of the theological content of Cassian's writings.

In the first chapter, I show how Cassian develops a standard monastic theme – the spiritual significance of dreams – in a way that shows maturity and independence in interpreting the tradition. In the second and third chapters, I continue this analysis by showing how Cassian interpreted the tradition about prayer represented in the writings of Evagrius Ponticus. In the fourth chapter, I assess how much Cassian and Augustine had in common, with respect to their monastic vocations and in reference to the Pelagian controversy. In the fifth and final chapter, I analyse Cassian's doctrine of the will, which is pivotal for his rejection of Pelagianism. All this allows me to conclude that Cassian's doctrine is in no way Pelagian and that the time-honoured misgivings are based on a faulty interpretation of his works. In conclusion, I suggest further lines in which this research could be developed, not least the presentation of Cassian's theology without deference to polemic interpreters.

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INTRODUCTION

Interest in the writings of St. John Cassian has never waned. This is due in large measure to Cassian's attractive combination of vivid narration and penetrating insight – particularly into human psychology. His memoirs of time spent with the Desert Fathers exercised an incalculable influence on Western asceticism. His monastic works, *On the institutes of the cenobia* and *On the eight deadly thoughts* and *The conferences*, were copied and studied for centuries. They became normative accounts of the Desert Fathers, particularly as the West and Egypt were effectively severed by political and theological circumstances. One mark of how great an impact these works had is that they earned Cassian an honour he shares only (to the best of my knowledge) with St Jerome: the books were translated from the Latin into Greek and thus absorbed into the corpus of Greek ascetic texts. In the form of apophthegmata, extracts from Cassian's writings were disseminated about as broadly as Christianity itself. Quotations – and, in some instances, lengthy passages – from 'Cassian the Roman' can be found in the Greek,¹ Coptic,² Syriac,³ Armenian,⁴ Arabic,⁵ Ethiopic⁶ and Slavonic⁷ literature.⁸ However, in this expurgated format the impact Cassian had was perforce very limited. It is in fact

¹ E.g., Nicodemus 1782: pp. 61-87; Dyovouniotis 1913; Marsili 1934; cf. Photius, *cod* 197, Henry 1959-1991: pp. 92-95

² E.g., *apoph* copt 26 (Chaîne 1960: p. 5)

³ See Sauget 1987, pp. 97, 173

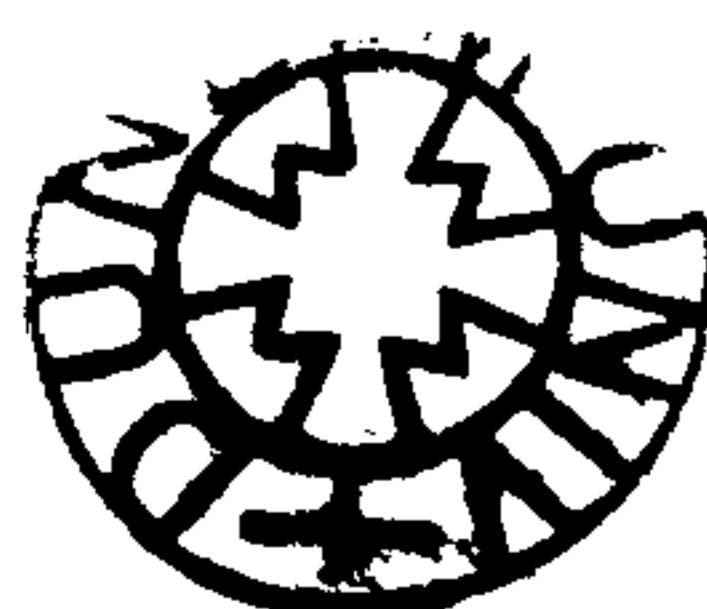
⁴ Cf. *pater* armen 4.18R, 5.54A-B, 6.8R, 11.18R, 13.14A-B, 13.15R, 18.73B (Leloir 1974-1976: 1.198, 2.54-56, 2.137-138, 3.137, 3.182-183, 3.193, 4.102-103)

⁵ E.g., in the Arabic translation of 'Enān šō', *paradisus patrum*; see Sauget 1987, p. 133; see also Graf 1944-1953, 1.380-388 (Arabic apophthegmata), 401 (Arabic extracts from Cassian's works)

⁶ E.g., *ascet* 5, 20, 22, 32, 38 (Arras 1984: 1.5, 23-24, 25-28, 37-38, 40 (text); 2.3-4, 16-19, 25-26, 28 (trans.)); *pater* aeth 34(28) (Arras 1967: 1.10-11 (text); 2.9 (trans.)); *coll mon* 16.7 (Arras 1963: 1.133-134 (text); 2.98 (trans.))

⁷ E.g., Zamfiresco 1990, pp. 1075-1114

⁸ I have not yet been able to find any traces of Cassian in the Georgian or Old Sogdian.



emblematic of Cassian's unassuming style that the apophthegmata ascribed to him are consistently his recollections of what better known people said or did! As for the tracts that occasionally come to light, e.g., in Greek, Arabic or Old Slavonic, they tend to corroborate other works in the larger corpus of monastic and ascetic literature without being particularly distinctive. Cassian himself tends to vanish. This thesis addresses the particularly distinctive elements in Cassian's theology – that is to say, in the terms, categories and images Cassian uses to talk about God.⁹ In the case of Cassian's relationship to the literary body of the Desert Fathers, we will consider Cassian's signature developments of the conventional ascetic understanding of dreams and their importance as a standard for spiritual progress.

Returning to the West, where Cassian's writings are preserved complete, we find that he similarly vanishes. This is attributable to the fact that he seldom speaks of himself. In the *Conferences*, he is little other than Germanus' loyal, taciturn sidekick. But it is also attributable to a rather more interesting phenomenon that goes right to the heart of this thesis. Despite initial appearances to the contrary, Cassian does not simply seek to edify with his books. They are indubitably edifying, and have been cherished on that account for generations, but they are also highly theologically charged. There is nothing so odd about that: edification does not and probably cannot occur in a theologically neutral environment. What would be deeply astounding to find is an author of the patristic age who tried to cultivate the spirit without simultaneously directing the mind. And this is just the point where troubles enter into the case for Cassian, because

⁹ The patristic use of the term 'theology' is a subject worth consideration in its own right. This thesis does not attempt an exhaustive account of Cassian's theology as such; rather, it attempts to account for how Cassian develops and employs traditional terms and categories about God in his writings. Because the

the mental formation that is the constant current, even in his prosaic descriptions of monastic clothing, stems directly from a controversial master who remains anonymous throughout Cassian's writings: Evagrius Ponticus. On this score, Cassian was wildly successful. The first systematic exploration of his debts to Evagrius only appeared within living memory. Another goal of this thesis is to further that exploration of Evagrian influence in Cassian, not least because the study of Evagrius has progressed by incredible strides over the last century.

Probably the biggest irony in the historical reception of Cassian's work is that, having promoted his Origenian views without causing distraction by naming them as such, Cassian was waylaid on charges of being theologically defective with respect to his teaching about grace. Within his own life, St Prosper of Aquitaine was keenly aware that Cassian's popular books reflected a particular theological perspective. And, in what I must regard as a singularly ill-advised and regrettably influential interpretation of Cassian's writings, Prosper diagnosed that perspective as one opposed to St Augustine's teachings about grace and denounced it as a bridgehead of Pelagianism within the Church. Though we must wait a further millennium for the advent of the term, with Prosper's treatise against Cassian, *Contra collatorem*, the accusation of semi-Pelagianism was born. Scholars have begun retracting from this term, which is certainly to the good: it is unclear what the term adds, it is unclear what it means, and in fact one of the few clear things about it is that it originated in debates twice as far removed from the time of Cassian, Augustine, Prosper and Pelagius as they were from the time of Jesus Christ!¹⁰ Even with the anachronism bracketed in scholarly discussions about Cassian and the Fifth

topic of this thesis is focused in this way, and because Cassian does not explain what he means by 'theology' in any case, detailed discussion of these questions will be reserved for future research.

Century in particular, one still hears with disquieting regularity statements that the Desert Fathers, or Byzantine Christians, or modern Orthodox Christians are semi-Pelagian. (It is particularly baffling to hear an Orthodox Christian, even one trained in patrology, claim this with some sense of pride.) Apart from the dubious conceptual coherence of semi-Pelagianism, the term needs serious rethinking because in the main it means anti-Augustinianism;¹¹ and it is not obvious what constitutes anti-Augustinianism in Late Antiquity or even, with the exception of Julian of Eclanum and a handful of other ancient authors, who the anti-Augustinians were. Furthermore, it is not obvious why modern scholars ought to regard Prosper's claims about what makes for orthodox, Fifth-Century Augustinianism as normative.

Now, Prosper's misgivings about Cassian's orthodoxy have largely set the parameters for interpreting Cassian and so, while I have no doubts about Cassian's orthodoxy and no intentions of endorsing Prosper's view, it is necessary to give this time-honoured perspective its due. This brings us to two further goals of this thesis. First, this thesis demonstrates that Cassian was not Pelagian in any sense of the term and that, on the contrary, he objected to Pelagian reforms on the basis of some deeply held principles. Calling Cassian a semi-Pelagian is therefore not only fatuous and misleadingly anachronistic; it is also quite simply wrong. Second, it shows that those principles were hardly foreign to Augustine's objections to Pelagius and Caelestius. We have already noted that Cassian's edifying tales are implicated in his theological views. In much the

¹⁰ See Jacquin 1907

¹¹ Émile Amann's working definition is a convenient example (*DTC* 14.1796-1797): 'Pour nous, le semi-pélagianisme est essentiellement un antiaugustinisme exacerbé, qui, s'effrayant à tort ou à raison de certaines affirmations du docteur d'Hippone sur le gouvernement divin des volontés humaines, sur la distributions des secours célestes, sur l'action de la grace, essaie de ménager dans l'œuvre du salut un part, plus ou moins considerable, plus ou moins exclusive aussi, à l'effort humain.'

same way, Augustine's monastic life is implicated in his rejection of Pelagianism. The implications of Augustine's vocation are seldom considered; in fact, my research has uncovered no study of Augustine's anti-Pelagianism in light of his monasticism. What this thesis will show, then, is that as monks Cassian and Augustine would have shared reasons for objecting to Pelagianism, and indeed did so. But just here it is necessary to issue a disclaimer: I am not prepared to assimilate Cassian's writings to Augustinian orthodoxy. It is certainly possible that one can be opposed to Pelagius without therefore being Augustinian. And in any case, as we have already suggested, it is unclear what Augustinian orthodoxy was at that time.

The reason it is worth devoting a considerable portion of this research to Cassian's relationship to Augustine is straightforward. The excellent results of Dom Marsili's research into Evagrius' influence on Cassian could well promote the unfortunate habit of assuming that Cassian was simply an Evagrian, full stop. But such an assumption could easily give undue weight to Evagrius' significance. We must hold open the possibility that Cassian sought or found inspiration from other sources as well. And even that is to say nothing of Cassian's potential for independent development. Both of these factors must be seriously considered. But even if it is premature to suppose that Evagrius was overwhelmingly influential on Cassian's intellectual outlook, there can still be no question that Evagrius' writings provide us with an important index for assessing Cassian. Accordingly, the thesis will also compare Cassian and Evagrius on a topic of great consequence for them both: prayer. This comparison will allow us to appreciate some measure of Cassian's mature relation to Evagrius. (Though we do not

know his precise age, we can be reasonably sure that Cassian began writing in his late fifties.)

To recapitulate, this thesis explores Cassian's theological competence under several rubrics. In the first chapter, Cassian's reception of and development of traditional uses of dream interpretation will be in evidence. Here it will be seen that Cassian's presentation of the traditional practice is enriched with content that can be explained in terms of his understanding of grace. This was a salient question in Gaul during Cassian's time there. Since Cassian forthrightly acknowledges his intention to offer meaningful advice in his recollections, it comes as no surprise that he would incorporate this novel material into his handling of dream interpretation. The next two chapters will refine this consideration by way of exploring Cassian's relationship to Evagrius in particular, on the matter of prayer. While the two theologians differ in terms of how they approach the subject, we will see that their affinity is profound. Even though Evagrius' focus is primarily on the theological substructure of prayer, and Cassian's on the experience of prayer, it will be shown that the two accounts are fundamentally consistent. Evidence from Evagrius' descriptions of what prayer is like and from Cassian's explanations of what prayer is confirms this claim. However, this does not mean Cassian simply cribbed Evagrius; on the contrary, Cassian's writings show that he subtly corrected Evagrius' teaching about Christ's place in prayer in order to preclude misinterpretation. In the fourth and fifth chapters, we will broach Cassian's attitude toward Pelagianism. Before turning directly to that topic in the fifth chapter, we will examine in the fourth chapter the monastic ambient in which both Cassian and Augustine objected to Pelagius, Caelestius and the other Pelagian authors. This is important because it goes to debunk the prevalent

beliefs that monks were predisposed to squeamishness about Augustinian theology and that 'semi-Pelagianism' represents a realistic, ascetically informed working doctrine of the balance of grace and freedom in the Christian life. As we will observe, Augustine was a monk, much of his resistance to Pelagianism is found in writings to other monks, and he was as sensitive as they were to the danger of undercutting monasticism by preaching fatalism. In the fifth and final chapter, we will focus on Cassian's rejection of Pelagianism. Because Cassian's doctrine of grace is a red herring, we will compare Cassian's doctrine of human will to the Pelagian doctrine. Obviously, this will necessitate some consideration of Pelagianism, not just in terms of what is Pelagian, but also in terms of what it means to describe something as Pelagian.

That is what this thesis will do. It is as well from the outset to say a few words about what it will not do. I noted at the beginning of this introduction that interest in the writings of St. John Cassian has never waned. In fact, one could say that over the last century interest in Cassian has reached a new level of intensity. This is apparent from the number of excellent monographs and essays devoted to him. These studies have rendered detailed consideration of a number of topics otiose. For instance, Sir Owen Chadwick's biography is still the standard treatment of Cassian's life as a whole.¹² There are also readily available analyses of Cassian in his socio-political context,¹³ his ecclesiastical context¹⁴ and, most recently, his monastic context.¹⁵ Somewhat less readily available, but still indispensable, is H. G. Evelyn White's massive examination of the monasteries

¹² Chadwick 1950; Chadwick 1968

¹³ Mathisen 1989; Mathisen's work is the closest approximation to any treatment of what influence Cassian's peers in Lérins and Marseilles may have had on his thinking. That topic would no doubt be a very fruitful one for further research.

¹⁴ Rousseau 1978

¹⁵ Stewart 1998

Cassian visited during his stay in Egypt.¹⁶ Otto Abel and Nora Chadwick have studied Cassian's works for their literary merit,¹⁷ while Claudio Leonardi has explained his place in the development of Mediaeval Latin Christianity in considerable detail.¹⁸ K. S. Frank and J.-C. Guy have both scrutinised the historical value of Cassian's testimony recently, Frank for autobiography, Guy for history of Egyptian monasticism.¹⁹ These studies are all enormously useful, but they fall generally outside the scope of the present thesis and so they will only be noted where relevant. Furthermore, in the interests of sitting respectfully on the shoulders of giants, I will not flag my every disagreement with these studies, but only those of particular importance for the thesis at hand. The reader interested in aspects of Cassian's life and works apart from their theological significance is referred to them.

On the matter of Cassian's theology, in addition to references scattered throughout the works just mentioned, there are several important works. Peter Munz has examined Cassian's affiliation with Origenian theology,²⁰ though it must be said that his article takes a line on what makes for Origenism that I do not accept. Dom Alfons Kemmer has argued that Cassian's descriptions of prayer show the imprint of Messalian and Syrian influences.²¹ Kemmer's provocative thesis will be considered in due course, but in passing I may say that I am not persuaded by the recent effort to rehabilitate it. More fruitful is the study of Cassian's indebtedness to Evagrius Ponticus in particular. Here, the work of Dom Salvatore Marsili is of the utmost importance.²² In the seventy

¹⁶ Evelyn White 1932

¹⁷ Abel 1904; Chadwick 1955

¹⁸ Leonardi 1978

¹⁹ Frank 1996; Guy 1966

²⁰ Munz 1960

²¹ Kemmer 1938; Kemmer 1948; Kemmer 1955

²² Marsili 1936

years that have elapsed since the publication of his thesis, however, the study of Evagrius has evolved considerably. This thesis is in part an effort to bring the project initiated by Marsili up to date. Other modern works have focused, not on Cassian's debts, but on his developments. Topics like Cassian's teaching on humility,²³ grace²⁴ and 'theological anthropology',²⁵ are convenient examples. These works have had little impact on this thesis. Far more influential have been three recent discussions of Cassian's Christology. Fr. Victor Codina has argued very persuasively that Cassian's neglected or despised treatise, *On the incarnation of the Lord, against Nestorius*, is a valuable key to Cassian's monastic works.²⁶ Meanwhile, in the introduction to his translation of that treatise, Lorenzo Dattrino has vindicated Cassian against his legion of critics.²⁷ (This can be contrasted to the comparable introduction to the French translation by Marie-Anne Vannier. Dr Vannier is an established critic of the theological and historical value of the work and her research basically extrapolates information from it that is peripheral to Cassian's avowed doctrinal and theological purpose.)²⁸ Finally, Donald Fairbairn has decisively shown that Cassian's Christology is the vehicle for his most refined statements about God's relationship to man. In other words, it is the foundation for Cassian's teaching on grace.²⁹

The research conducted chiefly by Codina, Fairbairn, Marsili and Stewart suggests that a re-evaluation of Cassian as a theologian is timely. The extensive use that continues to be made of Cassian for a variety of non-theological ends similarly motivates

²³ Beaudry 1967

²⁴ Hoch 1895

²⁵ Pristas 1993

²⁶ Codina 1966

²⁷ Dattrino 1991

²⁸ Vannier 1999; see also Vannier 1993

²⁹ Fairbairn, forthcoming

a new look at the theological value of Cassian's works. Cassian's testimony about the Angelic Rule, about the baptismal catechism of Antioch, about the Anthropomorphite-Origenian controversy, about 'pre-Nestorianism' in the West, and about a host of other topics cannot be divorced from his theological orientation. Scholars who attempt to do so, do so at their peril. Cassian's writings are informed by his theology. While it may be an overstatement to suggest that their value stands or falls with the value of his theology, it is quite accurate to say that ignoring or misunderstanding their theological framework is a certain way of increasing one's odds of getting things badly wrong. It is therefore hoped that a sympathetic examination of Cassian's tradition of theology will be useful beyond the narrow circle of theologians.

DREAMS AND GRACE

A life of Christian integrity is certain to be a shocking spectacle. Even saints can object mightily to displays of thoroughgoing piety – a fact that was no doubt impressed upon Licentius by St. Monica when that formidably pious old woman heard him singing Psalm 79 in the lavatory.¹ Yet the love of God has a tendency toward improprieties of that sort and often seeps through the compartments of respectability. More importantly, social norms are not the only bounds that fail to restrain the all-pervasive influence of holiness. In the following pages, we will consider Cassian’s teachings on the ways in which God’s holy and powerful love overleaps the ominous divide that separates sleeping from waking and, what this sharply demonstrates, Cassian’s teachings on grace. This sequence will allow us to approach Cassian’s doctrine of grace more stealthily, so to speak, and we may hope that it will give us a fresh perspective on this much-vexed topic.

- Dreams according to the sophists and physicians

As Peter Brown has commented with his usual perspicuity, ‘The historian is in danger of forgetting that his subjects spent much of their time asleep, and that, while asleep, they had dreams.’² Furthermore, many of them took care to write down what they dreamt. So once the topic is broached, it quickly becomes evident that the amount of material on dreaming from this age is vast. We find dreams explored in philosophical,

¹ Augustine, *ord* 1.8.22 (CSEL 63: p. 135): ‘Obiurgavit eum religiosissima, ut sc̄js, femina ob hoc ipsum, quod inconueniens locus cantico esset.’

² Brown 1971, p. 49; see also del Corno 1969, pp. VII-XV, and C. A. Behr’s sweeping survey of ‘oneirocriticism’: Behr 1968.

psychological, physiological, moral, and theological veins.³ Evidence reveals that an interest in dreams runs the gamut of late ancient society, cutting across all levels of education and culture. For instance, the Emperor Julian, the most notorious apostate of the patristic era, kept several dream-interpreters in his retinue and took their advice seriously when he made policy.⁴ To come to grips with the function assigned to dreams and dreaming in Cassian, it will be necessary to negotiate our way through the dense thicket of this material. Two presuppositions will guide us in this undertaking. Firstly, we will take for granted that Cassian's understanding of the significance of dreaming was formed by the highly literate monastic culture of his time. This assumption will be justified as the survey reveals how naturally his writings fit into the ambient of that culture. Secondly, we will observe that Cassian wrote for a fifth-century monastic audience, not a twenty-first century academic audience. This observation is not gratuitous, since the concerns of modernity (and postmodernity) are too often superimposed upon these writings in the scholarly debate, with the result that important consequences of Cassian's position are obscured or ignored in favour of lingering on the sexual implications of the texts. To understand Cassian's writings on dreams, it is important first to consider dreams in general terms, and then to situate erotic dreams within the framework provided by the broader analysis. Clearly, erotic dreams provoke a

³ Philosophical: Chrysippus; Cicero, *diu* 1.51.115-117, 57.129 (Quintus' position) (Pease 1963: pp. 306-308, 325-326) and 2.58.119-71.147, esp. 62.128, 67.139-140 (Tully's) (ibid.: pp. 543-579); Synesius, *insomn* (PG 66.1281-1320); Zeno. Psychological: Artemidorus; Nemesius of Emesa, *nat hom* 2.97, 3.131-133 (Morani 1987: pp. 27.22-24; 40.12-19); Pliny, *hist nat* 10.97-98 (Rackham 1938-1962: 3.424-428). Physiological: Aelius Aristides; Aristotle; Hippocrates; Galen; Paul of Aegina (see Adams 1844: I.1.63, 3.13). Moral: Clement; Hermas, *past* 7.1 (Joly 1958); Jerome, *ep* 22.30 (Labourt 1949); Philo. Theological: Diadochus of Photike, *cap gnosis* 36-40 (des Places 1955: pp. 105-108); Origen; *Perpetuae et Felicitatis, passim* (PL 3.9-62). Cf. Amat 1985; Behr 1993; Devoti 1987; Dodds 1965; Kerner 1942; Le Goff 1985; Miller 1994. Authors without references will be discussed in some detail below.

⁴ Julian, *ep* 4 (Wright 1923: pp. 8-14); Ammianus Marcellinus, *hist* 23.3.3 (Rolfe 1913-1939: 2.320); cf. Simmons 2000, pp. 1255-1260

moral crisis among monks, but I will contend that Cassian's assessment of these phenomena points to a resolution of a much broader sort than most secondary literature would suggest.

To begin, we shall first consider the writings of contemporaries and near contemporaries of Cassian who endorsed a 'theological theory' of dreams.⁵ The dearth of secondary material on this subject will necessitate a lengthy treatment of the sources here. Furthermore, evidence taken from polytheist authors will figure in here no less than that from Christian authors. Both groups alike generally regarded sleeping as time of receptivity and passiveness, for better or worse, with regard to divine influence. One classic example is the orator Aelius Aristides, who was prone to visions of Asclepius. This was no doubt a major source of comfort during his protracted bouts of hypochondria.⁶ Aristides' memoirs are morbid to the point of distraction, but the attitude that informs them is illuminating.⁷ In talking of his foster father, Epagathus, he gives us a vivid glimpse of how a cultured polytheist might relate to his gods – a glimpse that is surely autobiographical to a great extent: 'Epagathus was [...] quite a good fellow and most evidently conversed with the gods. He could recall entire oracles from his dreams, and, I might add, they would come to pass that very day.'⁸ Aristides' linking of medical concerns to dream interpretation was not unprecedented. For example, Galen (*fl.* 2nd c.

⁵ Miller 1994, pp. 51-73

⁶ Behr 1968; Miller 1994, pp. 184-204

⁷ As Campbell Bonner has noted, (Bonner 1937, p. 129), 'On the showing of these wonder-stories any normal reader inclines to dismiss Aristides as a maundering, brainsick noodle.' An exceptional reader, such as Bonner himself, would not dismiss Aristides; such a reader would rather take Aristides as an example of piety among the 'weaker vessels, wounded spirits' (ibid, p. 120). Cf. Dodds 1965, pp. 43-4.

⁸ Aristides, *orat* 50.54 (= *serm sac* 4.54) (Keil 1958: 2.439.13-16): ἦν Ἐπάγαθος ... μάλα ἀνὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ σαφέστατα ὁμιλῶν θεοῖς καὶ χρησμούς ἀπομνημονεύων ὅλους ἐξ ἐνυπνίων οἱ δ' ἀπέβαινον σχεδὸν ὡς εἰπεῖν αὐθημερόν.

BC) wrote a fascinating minor treatise, ‘On diagnosis from dreams.’⁹ Though precious little divine presence is evident in the physician’s treatise, it provided intellectual justification for hundreds of years for those who would attempt to incorporate dream-interpretation into their strategies for coping with pathology, spiritual no less than physical. Aristides, like his younger contemporary like Galen, was primarily concerned to cure debilitating physical conditions. But subsequent physicians applied Galen’s observations to the healing of spiritual maladies. To this extent, Evagrius and Cassian followed Galen’s lead no less than Aristides did.¹⁰

Another testimony to the importance of dream interpretation is the massive *Oneirocriticon* of Artemidorus.¹¹ In this work, Artemidorus makes an impassioned case that his profession of interpreting dreams is based on scientific principles. As evidence, he establishes a critical vocabulary and outlines his technique.¹² The promise of the book is, unfortunately, unrealised: despite Artemidorus’ intentions, it quickly degenerates into a tedious index for deciphering the significance of dreams and becomes mired in particularities.

- Dreams according to Philo

⁹ Galen, *dign ex insomn* (Guidorizzi 1973); on Galen in his time, see Bowersock 1969, pp. 59-75. This text is the longest treatment on dreams by Galen, but not the only text in which he discusses dreams: see also *In Hipp praed I. comm* 1.5 (Kühn 1829: 16.524-527); and *In Hipp de hum comm* 2.2 (ibid.: 16.219-226) – an excellent example of using dreams to diagnosis a disorder.

¹⁰ Cf. Guillaumont-Boussac 1952; Refoulé 1961, p. 507

¹¹ Pack (1955) presents an impressive amount of biographic information from the *Oneirocriticon*, providing a good introduction to the man behind the work. It should be noted that this genre did not vanish during the Christian era; e.g., from the 9th C. we have the *Oneirocriticon* of ps.-Nicephorus. This is available in a recent critical edition, with a useful survey of Byzantine oneirocriticism: see Guidorizzi 1980. This interesting material, however, is beyond the scope of the current thesis.

The trends we have seen in the sophists and physicians are echoed in later, Christian authors. And yet it is difficult to affirm with any real conviction that the Christians knowingly took up a position, for example, articulated by Galen in his attempts to sort out the Hippocratic corpus. Altogether more likely, however, is the possibility that the Christians were directly influenced by the works of Philo of Alexandria, who like them was a keen interpreter of Scripture and was at the same time versed in classical philosophy. Philo is known to have dedicated two treatises to the art of oneiromancy.¹³ Of these, one survives and it is entitled *Quod a Deo mittuntur somnia*, or briefly, *De somniis*. In this volume, Philo describes a three-fold classification scheme for dreams based on their content. According to Philo, the first sort of dreams comes directly from ‘the Deity’ and is characteristically lucid. This sort of dreams is oracular.¹⁴ The second sort of dreams is prophetic, inasmuch as its subject is what will be. It is doubly unlike the first sort of dreams, in that it is mediated through the angels and it is obscure, requiring skilful interpretation.¹⁵ Philo only vaguely describes the third sort of dreams, but in this case he makes no mention of God as its source, whether directly or indirectly. Because of the obscurity unvaryingly associated with this sort of dream, it is to be expected that its subject is enigmatic and ‘needs an oneirocritical knowledge’.¹⁶ This categorisation of dreams is the extent of Philo’s abstract treatment of the subject.

This general lack of consideration for oneirocritical theory notwithstanding,

¹² See Artemidorus, *oneir* 1.1.1-10.12, 4 pref-5 (Pack 1963: pp. 1-19, 236-248). Behr supplies a diagram of Artemidorus’s taxonomy that is very helpful: Behr 1968, p. 186 fn. 4.

¹³ Wolfson provides an introduction to this aspect of Philo’s thought, in the broader context of his concerns about prophecy: Wolfson 1948, pp. 55-59.

¹⁴ See Philo, *somn* 1.1.1, 2.1.2 (Colson 1929-1943: 5.294, 442)

¹⁵ Philo, *somn* 1.1.2, 2.1.2-3 (Colson 1929-1943: 5.294, 442-444)

¹⁶ Philo, *somn* 2.1.4 (Colson 1929-1943: 5.444): ἐδεήθησαν καὶ τῆς ὀνειροκριτικῆς ἐπιστήμης. This section contains a great deal of Philo’s fascinating allegorisation of the Septuagint, but is scarcely coherent as a sustained consideration of any sort whatever about dreams.

Philo's interest in dreams was not confined to these two works. Elsewhere he returns to this theme in a peculiar and interesting bit of ancient physiology, relating that the dreamer of prophecy, while sleeping, 'gazes into his liver as a mirror',¹⁷ in which are reflected the prophetic dreams. In any case, Philo was clearly motivated to justify the proper interpretation of dreams as prophecy of a broader sort than the simple prediction of future events, that is, as the business of unravelling God's message as it is expressed in dreams.

Several passages from Philo's treatise on the political life, the *Joseph*, attest to this concern. Thus Philo makes Joseph comfort the Pharaoh's imprisoned butler and baker by assuring them that their dreams 'will be understood, God willing, since He wills to disclose what is hidden to those who seek after truth'.¹⁸ Furthermore he identifies oneiromancers as prophets who have a concomitant obligation to speak truthfully.¹⁹ This claim is borne out by Pharaoh after Joseph interprets his two dreams, when he asks his ministers, 'Well, then, gentlemen, shall we find [another] man such as this, who has in himself a godly spirit?'²⁰ Like Aristides and Artemidorus, then, Philo considered sleeping particularly interesting as a time of passivity during which divine influence can act upon the sleeper. For his part, Philo unsurprisingly stipulates that the divine actor is

¹⁷ Philo, *spec leg* 1.219.9 (Colson 1929-1943: 7.226): εἰς κάτοπτρον ἀποβλέπων τὸ ἥπαρ; cf. *migr* 190.7 (Colson 1929-1943: 4.242)

¹⁸ Philo, *Ios* 17.91 (Colson 1929-1943: 6.184): γνώριμοι γὰρ ἔσονται βουλέμου θεοῦ· βούλεται δὲ τὰ συνεσκιασμένα τῶν πραγμάτων ἀνακαλύπτειν τοῖς ἀλήθειαν ποθοῦσιν. Philo returns to this point when he stresses that interpretation is only possible *by God*: *cher* 35.128.3 (Colson 1929-1943: 2.84). Interestingly, Origen makes the same claim: *FrGn* 41.5 (PG 12.91-146).

¹⁹ Philo, *Ios* 18.95 (Colson 1929-1943: 6.186): ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ τοῖς ὀνείρων κριταῖς ἀληθεύειν ἀναγκαῖον θεῖα λόγια διερμενύουσι καὶ προφητεύουσι, λέξω μηδὲν ὑποστειλάμενος... Philo's emphasis on the prophetic role of the *oneirocritic* is also evident at *aet mun* 1.2.5 (*ibid.*: 9.184), where the need for purity in order to receive and interpret dreams is asserted.

²⁰ Philo, *Ios* 21.116 (Colson 1929-1943: 6.196): ἄρ', ἄνδρες, εὐρήσομεν τοιοῦτον ἄνθρωπον, ὃς ἔχει πνεῦμα θεῖον ἐν ἑαυτῷ; Philo is paraphrasing Gen. 41.38.

none other than the Logos.²¹ His confidence in divine involvement in the process of prophecy and dreaming helps us understand Philo's sense of urgency in attempting to safeguard the dignity of oneiromancy from hucksters and soothsayers.²²

A final aspect of Philo's understanding of dreams deserves our attention, for at this point his writings come closest to the tradition Cassian would likely have encountered among the monks at Scete. In his treatise *On the Contemplative Life*, Philo describes an ascetic community in Alexandria, whom he calls collectively the *therapeutae* (or, when he speaks only of the women, the *therapeutrides*).²³ So great is their devotion God that even their dreams are of God, according to Philo.²⁴ Although the community Philo describes is Jewish, Eusebius of Caesarea in his *Ecclesiastical History* very influentially misidentified it as a Christian proto-monastic community.²⁵ The description of the asceticism observed by the *therapeutae* in their constant devotion to God exercised a persistent attractiveness on Christians, in addition to bolstering the claims to antiquity of the 'school of Alexandria'.²⁶ Even as the burgeoning Rabbinic tradition overshadowed Philonic Judaism, this element of his thought, like so many others, found a secure home among the Christian theologians of the Alexandrian school, to whom we now turn.

²¹ Philo, *somn* 1.19.118-20.120 (Colson 1929-1943: 5.360)

²² Philo, *Ios* 22.125 (Colson 1929-1943: 6.200); cf. Artemidorus' similar concerns for the respectability of the *oneirocritic*; and Quintus Cicero's approval of the traditional rites of divination, *diu* 1.58.132 (Pease 1963: p. 332-338).

²³ Sly 1996, pp. 138-149

²⁴ Philo, *cont uita* 3.26.2 (Colson 1929-1943: 9.126); cf. Theodoret of Cyr, *h rel* 2.2.34-36 (Carrivet 1977: 1.196-198): Julian recited the Psalter with such amorous devotion that by night he dreamt of his 'Beloved' and fantasized of his 'Beloved' by day (μόνον δὲ τὸν ἐρώμενον καὶ νύκτωρ ὀνειραπολεῖν καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν φαντάζεσθαι); and *ibid.* 21.34, 2.122.

²⁵ Eusebius, *he* 2.16.1-17.24 (Bardy 1952: 1.72-77); Sozomen reiterates the claim: *he* 1.12.9-11 (Bidez 1983: pp. 166-168).

- Oneirocriticism in Christian Alexandria and the desert

Clement of Alexandria, that other great philosopher-*cum*-theologian, included in his *Paedagogus* a lengthy treatment on ‘how sleep is to be used’,²⁷ full of sound and practical advice, such as how to sleep in such a way as to avoid heartburn,²⁸ as well as what sort of bedclothes are best.²⁹ But not all his concerns were so prosaic. He shared with Philo a conviction that some dreams are difficult to understand as a sort of exercise from God. This is so, not because He wants us not to understand the dreams, but because He wants us to develop our intelligence and grow strong.³⁰ This implies that Clement, too, understood some dreams to come from God and consequently to have a prophetic character.

We also find in his writings concerns that are specifically Christian. Clement relates a *risqué* story about a youth who makes arrangements with a prostitute for her to visit him the following night and agrees on a price for her services. But when she arrives, he refuses her entrance, because he had his fill of her charms in a dream the previous evening. The prostitute takes him before a famous judge, Bokhoris the Just, to collect her fee, claiming that her end of the bargain has been fulfilled. The judge cleverly bids her to take accept payment in the same coin – a figment of money for a figment of a

²⁶ Grant 1980, pp. 72-76; Sangrador 1994, pp. 46-53

²⁷ Clement, *paed* 2.9.77-82 (Stählin 1936: 1.204-207)

²⁸ Clement, *paed* 2.9.77.2 (Stählin 1936: 1.204.26-29): Οὐδὲ γὰρ συνέχει ἐπιστρεφομένοις τοῖς εὐναζοιμένοις ἐν αὐτοῖς διὰ τὴν παρ’ ἐκάτερα τοῦ σώματος ὁθώδῃ τῆς εὐνῆς ἐπαναστασιν· οὐδὲ ἐπιτρέπει δὲ πέττεσθαι σιτία καὶ συγκαίει μᾶλλον ὃ δὴ διαφθείρειν τὴν τροφήν.

²⁹ Clement, *paed* 2.9.78.3 (Stählin 1936: 1.205.18-20): Ἡμῖν δὲ χρηστέον ἀκολουθῶς τῷ λόγῳ ἀφελεῖ τῇ εὐνῇ καὶ λιτῇ σύμμετρον ἐχούσῃ τὸ παρηγοροῦν, εἰ θέρος εἴη, τὸ σκέπον, εἰ κρύας εἴη, τὸ θάλπον.

³⁰ Clement, *strom* 5.4.24.2 (Stählin 1936: 2.341.1-4): ὄνειροί τε καὶ σύμβολα ἀφανέστερα πάντα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὐ φθόνῳ οὐ γὰρ θέμις ἐμπαθῇ νοεῖν τὸν θεόν, ἀλλ’ ὅπως εἰς τὴν τῶν αἰνιγμάτων ἔννοιαν ἢ ζήτησις παρειδύουσα ἐπὶ τὴν εὕρεσιν τῆς ἀληθείας ἀναδράμῃ.

fling.³¹ Here, a tale that was in its original telling intended to point up the prudence of the just judge, has become evidence for Clement of the loftier morals of Christians – for whom such consorting with prostitutes is impermissible, even in dreams. In this connection, Clement states of the *gnostikos*,³² the Gnostic or perfect Christian, that in consequence of his *apatheia* he is ‘unmoved by the pleasures that come by day and through dreams’.³³ Clement further states that the Gnostic Christian ‘accomplishes and contemplates holy things ... even when seeing dreams’!³⁴ What we notice here is the regularity of Clement’s moralising of dreams. This comes from the stringent standards for Christian integrity established in the New Testament. Thus, Clement’s indignation at Bokhoris’ droll verdict is founded on Mt 5.27-28.³⁵ Conversely, we find in Clement very little interest in the predictive value of dreams, which was Artemidorus’ chief concern and also quite important for Aristides and Philo. This shift of interest toward the internal will have a decisive influence on the way in which Origenian theologians make sense of dreams.

However, progressive internalisation did not preclude interest in the classical questions about dreams, as is amply demonstrated by the writings of Origen himself.

³¹ Clement, *strom* 4.18.115.3 (Stählin 1936: 2.299.5-7): ... ἐν ἡλίῳ δέ, τὴν ἑταίραν λαβέσθαι προσέταξεν [sc., *Βοκχόρις*] τῆς σκιᾶς, χαριέντως εἰδῶλον μισθώματος ἀποδιδόναι κελεύσας εἰδῶλου συμπλοκῆς.

³² Guillaumont 1987; Layton 1987: pp. 5-9. The term *gnosis* has become increasingly associated in popular thought with a vague notion of mystical esoterica of one sort or another. However, it simply will not do as a general characterisation of *gnosis*, which has enjoyed currency and respect within the Orthodox Church right down to modern times. There is therefore no reason to relinquish the term to the exclusive use of New Age spirituality. For a more detailed consideration of problems stemming from loosely using the term, see Williams 1996 – a persuasive, if sometimes invidious, deconstruction of the category, ‘gnosticism’.

³³ Clement, *strom* 6.9.79.1 (Stählin 1936: 2.471.12): ... ἄκαμptos ἡδοναῖς ταῖς τε ὕπαρ ταῖς τε δι’ ὀνειράτων.

³⁴ Clement, *strom* 7.12.78.5 (Stählin 1936: 3.56.4-5): ... ἀλλὰ καὶ ὀνείρους βλέπων τὰ ἅγια ποιεῖ καὶ νοεῖ...

³⁵ Here we should recall Clement’s eager recollection of the Lord’s blessings on those whom their master finds watching (Lk 12. 35-57; see *paed* 2.9.79.1 (Stählin 1936: 1.205)). So, too, the Pauline admonition to vigilance during the nighttime of this life (1 Thess 5.5-8; *paed* 2.9.80.1, Stählin 1936, 1.206) is a powerful

When ‘Celsus’ Jew’ objects to the account of the Spirit of God descending at Jesus’ baptism, Origen calls attention to the biblical tradition of visions such as those of the Prophets Ezekiel (1.1, 1.28, 2.1) and Esaias (6.1-2).³⁶ Interestingly, Origen defends visions by asserting that they are, practically speaking, identical to sleeping visions. Of course, visions that come by night are dreams.³⁷ Origen must have assumed that the psychological and epistemological mechanisms of such dreams were common currency, for he invokes the *comparandum* without further comment in order to clarify the phenomenon of visions by day.³⁸ (This clarification turns on Origen invoking his teaching of the ‘spiritual senses,’ famous from his *Commentary on the Song of Songs*.³⁹) Some of the scheme he uses to classify these visions is familiar from our survey of Philo; again, dreams may be oracular or predictive, through the mediation of angels.⁴⁰

Though Origen accepts that Christian prophecy can predict future events, elsewhere he appears sceptical in general of the value of predictions. ‘...sometimes we understand nothing of obscure dreams, but we assign the most befitting explanation to them when they have come to pass...’⁴¹ What context we have suggests his target here is

consideration for every Christian – not just as a lofty moral precept, but as practical teaching for daily life. Note Origen’s comparable exegesis of 1 Cor 16.13-14: *FrCor* 90 (Jenkins 1907-1909: p. 51).

³⁶ Origen, *Cels* 1.41, 1.43 (Koetschau 1899: pp. 91.31–92.5, 93.27-32)

³⁷ Origen, *Cels* 1.48 (Koetschau 1899: p. 97.24-26): ... ὅναρ πεπίστευται πολλοὺς πεφαντασιῶσθαι τινὰ μὲν θεϊότερα τινὰ δὲ περὶ μελλόντων βιωτικῶν ἀναγγέλλοντα εἴτε σαφῶς εἴτε καὶ δι’ αἰνιγμάτων, καὶ τοῦτ’ ἐναργές ἐστι παρὰ πᾶσι τοῖς παραδεξαμένοις πρόνιαν...

³⁸ Origen, *Cels* 1.48 (Koetschau 1899: p. 97.27-29): ... οὕτως τι ἄτοπον τὸ τυποῦν τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν ἐν ὀνείρῳ δύνασθαι αὐτὸ τυποῦν καὶ ὕπαρ πρὸς τὸ χρήσιμον τῷ ἐν ᾧ τυποῦνται ἢ τοῖς παρ’ αὐτοῦ ἀκουσομένοις; The only Christian author I have yet found who addresses the psychological mechanisms of dreams in any detail is Nemesius, *nat hom* 12.201 (Morani 1987: p. 68.9-11).

³⁹ Origen, *Cels* 1.48 (Koetschau 1899: pp. 97.30-99.19); cf. *CCt* prologue 1.4-7 (Brésard 1991-1992: 1.82-86). Evagrius similarly endorsed the ‘spiritual senses’; see *KG* 2.35 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 75).

⁴⁰ In addition to the texts considered above, see also Origen’s comments on the angelic visitations to Joseph, Origen, *Cels* 1.66 (Koetschau 1899: p. 120.7-8): τὸ δὲ ὅναρ δηλοῦσθαί τισι τάδε ποιεῖν καὶ ἄλλοις πλείοσι συμβαίνει, εἴτ’ ἀγγέλου εἶθ’ οὐτινοσοῦν φαντασιοῦντες τὴν ψυχὴν.

⁴¹ Origen, *CGn* 12.85.41 (= *Phil* 23.22.30-31 (Junod 1976: p. 208)): ... ἐπὶ τῶν λογῶν ὀνείρων ἐνίστε οὐδὲν νοοῦμεν, ἀποβάντων δὲ οἰκειοτάτην προσφέρομεν ἐπίλυσιν... This attitude is a commonplace at least as ancient as Homer: cf. *Odyssey* 19.560-569 (Bérard 1947: 3.90).

professional dream-interpreters. When he discusses specifically Christian prophecy,⁴² Origen parenthetically notes that the Spirit has converted many to Christianity (even from hatred of Christ to Christian martyrdom) and has caused them to see visions by day – and by night.⁴³ Origen elsewhere gives the example of Pilate’s wife, writing in his *Scholia on St Matthew* that the dreams that troubled her were providential, not to keep Christ from suffering, but to insure her salvation. He concludes with a lovely beatitude: ‘Blessed is she who could suffer such things in dreams, so as not to suffer exceedingly.’⁴⁴

Origen discusses the significance of dreams and dreaming in apologetic and exegetic contexts. In his turn, Evagrius also has a great deal to say about dreams and dreaming when he expounds Holy Scripture. But Evagrius deploys in exegesis a teaching about dreams tempered by ascetic practice and reflection. To make sense of its application in scriptural interpretation, we must consider first the place of dreams and dreaming in his monastic programme. And to appreciate the profundity of Evagrius’ accomplishment, we will do well to consider how other monastic authors treated dreams and dreaming.

At night, the demons torment some monks in their dreams. In *Against the demon*, Shenouda denounces their wiles, disingenuously changing appearances so as to lead the sleeping Christian into sin.⁴⁵ Thus, Abba Arsenius keeps vigil lest the demons attack and ‘rob’ him.⁴⁶ Palamon, Pachomius’ mentor, follows a regime of rigorous vigils that

⁴² Origen, *Cels* 1.46 (Koetschau 1899: p. 96.7): ὁρῶσί τινα κατὰ τὸ βούλημα τοῦ λόγου περὶ μελλόντων

⁴³ Origen, *Cels* 1.46 (Koetschau 1899: p. 96.9-13)

⁴⁴ Origen, *CMtS* 324.3 (Klostermann 1976): Μακαρία δὲ ἡ τοιαῦτα ἀπέχουσα ἐν ὀνείροις τὸ παθεῖν, ἵνα μὴ ὑπερπάθῃ. Pilate’s wife is commemorated together with him in the Ethiopic Synaxarion as Saint Ebroqla (Procla) on 25 Sanê (19 June): (Guidi 1907-1989: 1.674-675).

⁴⁵ Shenouda, *Adu daem* 2.53-5.14, (Du Bourguet 1961-1962: pp. 24-26), at 2.53-3.2: ‘Why do you come and go around them in the fantasy of dreams of many forms, if you are wanting to fight?’ ΕΤΒΕΟΥ ΕΚΚΑ ΕΚΚΗΥ ΜΠΕΥ ΚΩΤΕ ΖΙΚΕ ΦΑΚΤΑCΙΑ ΚΖΕΚ ΡΑCΟΥ ΚΖΑΖ ΚCΜΟΥ ΕΩΧΕ ΚΡΥΕΩ ΜΙΩΕ.

⁴⁶ *apoph* Arsenius 43 (PG 65.108)

Pachomius adopts, the purpose of which is to make more time for prayer.⁴⁷ To this end, Palamon exhorts Pachomius, saying, ‘Awake, Pachomius, lest Satan tempt and harm you!’⁴⁸ Eventually, by the goodness of God, Pachomius is made sleepless for a time so that he can combat the enemy day and night.⁴⁹ By night the demons parade fantasies before John of Lycopolis, denying him rest.⁵⁰ Other stories stress the revelatory character of dreams. This same John also famously appears in a dream to the tribune’s wife whom he refused to see and who consequently refused to depart on her journey lacking the holy man’s blessing. Eventually, John acceded to the request of the importunate wife, but only appeared to her in a dream, thus miraculously keeping himself from the woman.⁵¹ Abba Or is vouchsafed by an angel in a dream the assurance that he will succeed as a monastic founder.⁵² So, too, Apollo’s promise to the brigand of forgiveness for his sins if he repudiates his murderous past, is confirmed that night in a dream that he and Apollo share.⁵³ Similarly, Paternuthius is converted because of a dream.⁵⁴ Symeon the Stylite’s remarkable monastic career began after a vision he had while sleeping in a martyrion,⁵⁵ as did Pachomius’ after a dream he had the night of his baptism.⁵⁶ A dream strengthens Orsisius’ resolve to make Theodore his successor at Tabennisi.⁵⁷

The dreams of seculars often make evident God’s providential care for the monks. It is told that when Pachomius’ community lacked wheat, a man who had vowed the Lord

⁴⁷ *u Pach gr prima* 6 (Athanassakis 1975: pp. 8.30-32, 10.11-12); cf. 60.

⁴⁸ Ibid. (Athanassakis 1975: p. 10.12-13): «Νῆφε, Παχούμιε, μὴ πειράσῃ σε ὁ Σατανᾶς καὶ βλαβῆς»

⁴⁹ Ibid. 22.

⁵⁰ *HM* 1.61.404-405 (Festugière 1961: p. 33): φαντασίας...τινας

⁵¹ In Rufinus’ Latin version, *VSP* 1.1.12 (Schulz-Flügel 1990: p. 250.52-53), the harried John rather mysteriously tells the tribune: ‘uade, [Ioannes] inquit, uidebit me coniux tua hac nocte, non tamen huc ueniet, sed in domo sua atque in lecto suo manebit’!

⁵² *HM* 2.4 (Festugière 1961: p. 36)

⁵³ *HM* 8.32-35 (Festugière 1961: pp. 59-61)

⁵⁴ *HM* 10.3 (Festugière 1961: p. 76)

⁵⁵ Theodoret of Cyr, *h rel* 26.3 (Carrivet 1977: pp. 162-164)

wheat for his safety in the mines was shown in dreams to donate it to the Tabennisiot monks.⁵⁸ Artemius, the general whom Constantius commissioned to apprehend Athanasius, came to Tabennisi searching for the archbishop. He awoke that night, his nose bleeding, and departed claiming that in a vision he had only escaped death by God's mercy, thus leaving the monks in peace.⁵⁹ Dreams can also prove very effective vehicles for correction. When a pilgrim dozes during verbose Copres' stories about Paternuthius, he is reprimanded in a vision for his lapse.⁶⁰ An unnamed old monk, grouching at what he supposed to be Pachomius' recklessness with the lives of others, is chastised that night in his dreams.⁶¹ A final image from these tales is worth repeating. Macarius, while wandering through the desert, had used palm branches to mark his trail. But the demons gather them as he sleeps and lay them down by his head.⁶² Like the angel who fanned Abba John the Dwarf as he slept,⁶³ this story graphically reveals the conviction that superhuman powers surround the sleeping monk.

Most of these tales are vivid, and some of them evocative and highly symbolic. But they appear as little more than adjuncts, illustrating an ascetic curriculum without

⁵⁶ *u Pach gr prima* 5 (Athanassakis 1975: p. 8.11-16)

⁵⁷ Ibid. 129.

⁵⁸ Ibid. 39.

⁵⁹ Ibid. 137-138.

⁶⁰ *HM* 10.25 (Festugière 1961: pp. 85-86); both Copres and John of Lycopolis are quite garrulous, and on that account the *Historia* represents the wisdom of the desert fathers as rather more like Cassian's expansive talks than the clipped and often enigmatic utterances preserved among the *Apophthegmata*. With Copres, our pilgrims experience at firsthand the phenomenon Egeria related to her sisters in Spain, 20.13.88-96 (Maraval 1982): 'Et cetera plura monachi facere dignabantur, omnia tamen de Scripturis Dei uel sanctis uiris gesta, id est monachis, siue qui iam recesserant, quae mirabilia fecerint, siue etiam qui adhuc in corpore sunt, quae cotidie faciant, hi tamen qui sunt ascites. *Nam nolo estimet affectio uestra monachorum aliquando aliquando [sic] alias fabulas esse nisi aut de Scripturis Dei, aut gesta monachorum maiorum.*' (emp. added.) The work of Dr. Faraggiana di Sarzana suggests that the *Apophthegmata* should be thought of, not so much as stenographic records of the *ipsissima uerba* of the Fathers and Mothers, but as select passages excerpted from longer records: cf. Faraggiana di Sarzana 1997.

⁶¹ *u Pach gr prima* 70

⁶² *HM* 21.10-11 (Festugière 1961: p. 126)

⁶³ *apoph* John the Dwarf 33 (PG 65.216)

adding any new dimension to it. We encounter something quite different when we read Evagrius, whose understanding of dreams is manifestly an integral element of his ascetic theology. This is clear from the very beginning, since he describes dreams using the rich vocabulary developed for his theological psychology. For Evagrius, a fundamental category of psychological activity is that of the ‘thoughts’, or *logismoi*.⁶⁴ In Evagrian theology, however, the *logismoi* are generally very bad things indeed: they are little else than demonic calling cards.⁶⁵ So close is this association that Prof. Louth writes, ‘For much of the desert tradition, two words are almost synonymous: *logismos* and demon. *Logismos* means a “thought”, and the *logismoi* we encounter in the writings of the Desert Fathers are thoughts caused by demons.’⁶⁶ Evagrius makes the point that the ‘the demonic thoughts’ (οἱ δαιμονιώδες λογισμοί) use the Christian’s memory as an arsenal, from which are drawn ‘those memories that unnaturally draw to their ruin anger or desire’.⁶⁷ And this is certainly no less true at night than during the day.⁶⁸ It is chiefly, then, in his capacity as a spiritual father and healer of souls that Evagrius is interested in

⁶⁴ Thus, Evagrius, *prak* 48 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.608): *Τοῖς μὲν κοσμικοῖς οἱ δαίμονες διὰ τῶν πραγμάτων μᾶλλον παλαίουσι, τοῖς δὲ μοναχοῖς ὡς πλείστον διὰ τῶν λογισμῶν· πραγμάτων γὰρ διὰ τὴν ἐρημίαν ἐστέργηται.* (We should remember Antoine Guillaumont’s wise observation, (Géhin 1998), p. 15: ‘le mot *πράγματα* peut désigner aussi bien des personnes que des choses: ce sont tous «objets» de perception sensible.’) See also *prak* 7, 9-13, cf. 5, 22 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.508-510, 512-530, 504, 552); *cog* 2 (Géhin 1998: p. 154-156), with Guillaumont’s introductory remarks, (Géhin 1998: pp. 17-18); and *orat* 139 (on this text, see the notes in ‘Evagrius on prayer’). The relationship that exists between these thoughts (daydreams, we might say) and dreams means that care must be taken lest one’s spiritual progress be lost through the evil influence of diabolical fantasies (*cog* 17 (Géhin 1998: p208-214): *Οὐ μόνον δὲ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ δεῖ ταῦτα τηρεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ νύκτωρ ἀγρυπνοῦντα φυλάττειν· συμβαίνει γὰρ καὶ φανταζόμενον αἰσχροῦς καὶ πονηρῶς ἀπολέσαι τὸ ἴδιον...*). A comparable psychological account of sin and temptation can be found in Mark the Hermit, *bapt* 11.36-57 (de Durand 1999: pp. 366-368).

⁶⁵ Evagrius, *prak* 43 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.598-600); cf. *cog* 2 (Géhin 1998: pp. 154-156). Brown excellently describes the *logismoi/cogitationes*: Brown 1988, p. 167. Positive or acceptable thoughts are qualified as such, reinforcing the conclusion that generally thoughts are bad; cf. *prak* 30, 33 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.570, 574-576); *sch* 93 in Prov 7.12-13 (Géhin 1987: p. 192). I thank Mr. Mika Törönen for calling my attention to this trend.

⁶⁶ Louth 1991, p. 51; cf. *apoph* Poemen 67 (PG 65.337).

⁶⁷ Evagrius, *cog* 2.15-16 (Géhin 1998: p. 156): *ὅσαι τῶν μνημῶν θυμὸν ἢ ἐπιθυμίαν παρὰ φύσιν συνεπισπῶνται.* Cf. *ibid.* 17 (pp. 208-214).

⁶⁸ See Evagrius, *cog* 4.6-9 (Géhin 1998: pp. 162-164): *Οἱ οὖν δαίμονες εἰκόασί μοι τὴν μνήμην κινεῦντες*

dreams, for they constitute a window into the workings, diseased or healthful, of the soul.⁶⁹

At this juncture, we must say a word about Evagrius' sources. It has been well established and generally acknowledged that Aristotle and Zeno crafted the psychological and philosophical categories to which Evagrius had recourse. And to this list is sometimes, though not always, added the philosopher and physician Galen.⁷⁰ But paying only perfunctory attention to the Hippocratic tradition is a serious mistake. To be sure, Evagrius' very expressions would not have been possible but for the philosophical vocabularies fixed by Aristotle and Zeno. But it is to be doubted whether the niceties of philosophical usage were a great concern for Evagrius, inasmuch as he constantly misapplies the technical terms *phantasia*⁷¹ and *noēmata*.⁷² This indicates that he used

τυποῦν τὸ ἡγεμονικόν· τὸ γὰρ ὄργανον ὑπὸ τοῦ ὕπνου κατέχεται ἀνενέργητον.

⁶⁹ On Evagrius as a spiritual father, see Bunge 1994b.

⁷⁰ Refoulé (1961) comes precariously close to underemphasising the enormous debt Evagrius owes (knowingly or unknowingly) to Galen. Antoine Guillaumont's introduction to the recent critical edition of Evagrius' *cog*, (Géhin 1998), fails to mention Hippocratic sources, though a great deal of attention is paid to Aristotelian and Stoic psychological theories.

⁷¹ Diocles the Magnesians indicates that the Stoic understood *phantasia* to be a process, rather than the result of a process. The following text, *ap.* Diogenes Laërtius 7.50 (=SVF 2.55 (von Arnim 1923: 2.22.21-24)), is explicit: Διαφέρει δὲ φαντασία καὶ φάντασμα· φάντασμα μὲν γὰρ ἐστὶ δόκησις διανοίας οἷα γίνεται κατὰ τοὺς ὕπνους[!], φαντασία δὲ ἐστὶ τύπωσις ἐν ψυχῇ, τουτέστιν ἀλλοιώσις, ὡς ὁ Χρύσιππος ἐν τῷ β' Περὶ ψυχῆς ὑφίσταται. This was evidently an important distinction for Chrysippus – see Aëtius Doxographus, *plac* 4.12.1 (= SVF 2.54 (von Arnim 1923: 2.21.20-22.20)). Indeed, Chrysippus asserted that even irrational animals have *phantasmata*; see *plac* 4.11 (= SVF 2.83 (von Arnim 1923: p. 28.26-30)). According to a logion attributed to him by Sextus Empiricus at *adu math* 7.27 (= SVF 2.56, (von Arnim 1923: p. 23.6)), Zeno describes *phantasia* as a changing of the soul, giving further evidence of the fundamentally active sense of the Stoic term: φαντασία ἐστὶν ἐτεροίωσις ψυχῆς. Aristotle defined the term similarly, *anima* 3.3.6 (428a1-4); cf. 3.4.13 (428b30-429a1), though the MSS vary tremendously here: see Hicks 1907.

Accordingly, if Evagrius conscientiously used classical terminology, we would expect to read, 'πέφυκε καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ νοῦς κινούμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τῶν γεγονότων ἀναφέρειν τὰ φάντασματα' – but instead he wrote, '...ἀναφέρειν τὰς φαντασίας': *cog* 2.13-14 (Géhin 1998: p. 154); cf. *ibid* 2.18, 4.22, 4.25, 27.8, 27.16, 27.17, 27.21, 27.27, 28.8; and perhaps 4.1 and 29.1 (pp. 156, 164, 248-250, 252; 162 and 254). A. Guillaumont notes that Evagrius does not follow the Stoic distinction, but he inaccurately describes φαντασία according to the Stoics as 'la représentation résultant de la perception immédiate d'objets sensible', though he rightly refers to φάντασμα simply as 'l'image', (Géhin 1998: pp. 26-27). Galen notably also misuses *phantasia*, if we take the strict definition as normative; see fn. 73.

⁷² Aristotle sharply distinguishes intellection from perception: *anima* 3.3.3 (427b6-7). Images (*phantasmata*) take the place of perceptions (*aisthemata*) for the thinking soul and the soul never thinks

current jargon without regard to employing it precisely as Stoic or Peripatetic terminology, adapting it to construct his own critical vocabulary. In moulding these terms to his own ends, Evagrius' governing concern for spiritual well-being was more important than his fidelity to classical theory. So it is appropriate for us to note that the physicians of antiquity, too, concerned themselves with dreams and dreaming.

Not least among them was Hippocrates himself, who states, 'Whoever has learned rightly about signs during sleep will discover they have great power with respect to all things.'⁷³ Sometimes there is a perceptible uneasiness about allocating to dreams their place in the physician's technique.⁷⁴ But dreaming is an irreducible fact of life, not to be ignored. Galen in particular makes use of the complex psychosomatic relationship to craft a diagnostic that takes into account dreams. 'For the soul seems to enter into the depths of the body and retire from external stimuli during dreams, to perceive the bodily disposition and to seize the appearance of all the things for which it yearns, as though they were already present'.⁷⁵ This clearly makes dreams important for the business of rectifying bodily disorders. Since the physicians' interests were not in this case

without images – see 3.7.2 (431a14-15); 3.8.3 (432a7-10). Clearly he distinguishes *phantasmata* from *noēmata*, as is amply demonstrated by what follows: τὰ δὲ πρῶτα νοήματα τίνι διοίσει τοῦ μὴ φαντάσματα εἶναι; ἢ οὐδὲ τὰλλα φαντάσματα, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἄνευ φαντασμάτων (432a12-14; see also Hicks 1907, pp. 547-548). By contrast, some passages in Evagrius indicate that he takes *noēmata* to be images; e.g., *cog* 6, 16, 19 (Géhin 1998: pp. 170-172, 204-208, 216-222); *sch* 3 in Eccl 1,11, *sch* 35.3-6 in Eccl 5.1-2 (Géhin 1993: pp. 60-62, 116), where the Aristotelian position is decisively subverted (cf. *orat* 114-120); *sch* 263, 317, 344 in Prov 23.33, 25.26, 28.7 (contrast these with *sch* 362 in 29.10, where 'νενοημένα' unambiguously refers to thoughts, not images) (Géhin 1987: pp. 358, 408, 434-436, 452). The French translators of *cog* consistently render 'τὰ νοήματα' as 'représentations' – 'après maintes hésitations' (Géhin 1998: p. 24) – but often the passage retains its sense if 'τὰ νοήματα' is understood to mean 'the thoughts'.

⁷³ Hippocrates, *diaeta* 4.86.1 (= *insomn* 86.1.1-3) (Joly 1967: p. 97.1-3): Περὶ δὲ τῶν τεκμηρίων τῶν ἐν τοῖσιν ὑπνοῖσιν ὅστις ὀρθῶς ἐγνώκε, μεγάλην ἔχοντα δύναμιν εὐρήσει πρὸς ἅπαντα.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 4.87.1-2 (Joly 1967: p. 98)

⁷⁵ Galen, *dign ex insomn* (Guidorizzi 1973: ll. 33-36): Ἔοικε γὰρ ἐν τοῖς ὑπνοῖς εἰς τὸ βάθος τοῦ σώματος ἢ ψυχῇ εἰσδύσα καὶ τῶν ἐκτὸς ἀποχωρήσασα αἰσθητῶν, τῆς κατὰ τὸ σῶμα διαθέσεως αἰσθάνεσθαι, πάντων τε ὧν ὀρέγεται, τούτων ὡς ἤδη παρόντων λαμβάνειν φαντασίαν. Even Cicero, usually so reticent in finding meaning in dreams, is generous on this topic, *diu* 2.69.142 (Pease 1963: p. 572): 'Nam medici ex quibusdam rebus et advenientis et crescentis morbos intellegunt, non nullas etiam valetudinis significationes, ut hoc ipsum, pleni enectine simus, ex quodam genere somniorum intellegi posse dicunt.'

speculative, but were rather practical, it is easy to see how their precedent might escape notice. Nonetheless, it is undoubtedly the case that Evagrius' programme for coping with dreams is profoundly indebted to Hippocrates, Galen and the others for legitimating the significance of dreams for diagnostic purposes. When Hippocrates validated the appropriateness of a doctor assessing his patient's dream life, he provided a respectable justification for Evagrius' therapy of revealing one's dreams to the monastic elders.⁷⁶

To return to Evagrius' writings, it is clear that from his understanding of dreams, he has at his disposal a ready exegesis when Scripture refers disapprovingly to sleep. Thus he is even so bold as to represent dreams as attacking demons,⁷⁷ and bluntly to claim, apropos of Job 7.14, Ps. 12/3.3-5 and Prov. 6.4, that 'sleep means ignorance and vice there [sc., in the rational soul]'.⁷⁸ In his exegesis of Ps. 118/9.2, quoted in a version familiar from the Vulgate ('My soul has rested from listlessness; strengthen me in Your words'), we find a definition of listlessness, or *akedia*, as well as a few additional remarks on sleeping. 'Listlessness is an enduring movement of wrath and desire in the same person – on the one hand, being angry with what is present; on the other, longing for what is absent. Slumber is the rational soul's negligence toward the virtues and the knowledge of God; sleep is the rational soul's voluntary separation from the true life.

⁷⁶ Mme. Guillaumont, (Guillaumont-Boussac 1952), rightly notes, 'La tradition médicale avait déjà tenu compte des rêves pour établir le diagnostic de diverses maladies: Évagre pouvait s'inspirer de la méthode, mais en transposant les conclusions du plan physiologique au plan psychique.' Cf. Guy 1974. Evagrius' scheme for using dreams to diagnose spiritual disorder represents a class of 'dreams and therapy' not considered by Miller, who contrasts only the Hippocratic tradition and the Asclepian tradition: Miller 1994, pp. 106-117.

⁷⁷ Evagrius, *sch* 35.13-15 in Eccl 5.1-2 (Géhin 1993: p. 116): ἐνύπνιον λέγ[εται] τὸν καθευδούσαις ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἐφιστάμενον μετὰ πλήθους πειρασμῶν δαίμονα καὶ ἐκταράσσοντα τὴν ψυχὴν...

⁷⁸ Evagrius, *sch* 74 on Prov 6.9 (Géhin 1987: p. 172): ὕπνος γὰρ ἐστὶ λογικῆς ψυχῆς ἄγνοια καὶ κακία. It is in light of this that Evagrius interprets St Paul's admonition to vigilance (Eph. 5.14). See also *sch* 70 on Prov 6.4 (ibid: p. 164); *sch* 37 in Eccl 5.5 (Géhin 1993: p. 126); in Ps 16.3β (on which text, see the notes to ch. 2, below).

And for this reason the wise Solomon counsels against giving sleep to the eyes, slumber to the eyelids (Prov 6.4)',⁷⁹

Because of his close linking of demons and thoughts and dreams, Evagrius recognises as many sorts of dreaming temptations as there are sorts of demons.⁸⁰ Much scholarly work has explored in great detail the manifestations of lust in monks' dreams.⁸¹ This was a chief concern for monastic theologians,⁸² not least Evagrius⁸³ and Cassian – who dedicated an entire book to the topic.⁸⁴ But we can be distracted far too easily by the sexuality of ascetics, and in our enthusiasm misestimate how important this aspect of dreaming was to the ascetics themselves.⁸⁵ Sexual concerns are not for Evagrius ultimate

⁷⁹ Evagrius, *in Ps* 188.28γ: Ἀκηδία ἐστὶ κίνησις ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ πολυχρόνιος θυμοῦ καὶ ἐπιθυμίας· τοῦ μὲν τοῖς παροῦσιν ὀργιζομένου, τῆς δὲ ἐφιεμένης τῶν μὴ παρόντων. Νυσταγμός ἐστὶ ψυχῆς λογικῆς ἀμέλεια τῶν ἀρετῶν καὶ τῆς γνώσεως τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ· ὕπνος ἐστὶ ψυχῆς λογικῆς χωρισμὸς ἐκούσιος ἀπὸ τῆς ὄντως ζωῆς· διὸ καὶ ὁ σοφὸς Σολομὼν παραινεῖ μὴ δοῦναι ὕπνον τοῖς ὄμματι, μηδ' ἐπινυστάξαι τοῖς βλεφάροις.. The force of these negative associations is somewhat deflected by his remarks at *KG* 1.38 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 35); cf. *octo spir mal* 13-14 (PG 79.1157-1160). On the attribution of the *in Pss* to Evagrius, see below. On listlessness in Evagrius, see Bunge 1991.

⁸⁰ Cf. Evagrius, *prak* 43 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.598-600)

⁸¹ Brakke 1995; Brown 1988; Foucault 1988; Foucault 1997; Le Goff 1985, esp. pp. 294-295; Paden 1988; Stewart 1998. Foucault's essay has exerted a huge influence on the scholarly discussion. But Pierre Hadot's response to Foucault's project must be taken into account, not least because Hadot's philological and historical rigour acts as a much-needed ballast for Foucault's historico-philosophical claims: Hadot 1995. See also John Behr's critical assessment, Behr 1993.

⁸² Antony the Great, *ep* 1.4, Latin: (PG 40.979); Greek: *apoph* Antony 22 (PG 65.84); Syriac: (Nau 1909) (on the letters, see (Rubenson 1995) and now (Casiday forthcoming-a)); Dioscorus: *HM* 20.1-4 (Festugière 1961: pp. 118-119); Eulogius, the clairvoyant priest, who chastises a monk who comes to communion, though the previous night he entertained obscene thoughts (τὴν ἀπρεπῇ τῆς πορνείας ἐνθύμησιν): *HM* 16.1.7-8 (Festugière 1961: p. 112); Moses the Ethiopian: *HL* 19.5-11 (Bartelink 1974: pp. 98-102) – on which, see below; the anonymous Fifth Century treatise *cog qu.* 26-7 (Guy 1957); John Climacus, *scal* 15 (PG 88.889-897), and *sch* 40 thereon (PG 88.920); perhaps Amoun (PG 26.1169-1176), though his concerns may well have been purely disciplinary; cf. *apoph* Gerontius (PG 65.153).

⁸³ At *prak* 55 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.628), Evagrius sets out rules for interpreting dreams: an imageless dream, even if it causes a spontaneous penile erection, attests to the soul's health; and a dream with images attests to the soul's infirmity; while the distinctiveness of the dream indicates the freshness of the passion; see also *prak* 56 (ibid: 2.630-632), and *cog* 4 (Géhin 1998: pp. 162-164). Cf. (Guillaumont 1979a), p. 86; and (Stewart 2001). I am grateful to Dom Stewart for providing me a copy of his splendid lecture. See also Abba Isaiah, *hom* 11.30 (Draguet 1968: 2.132), which continues the Evagrian tradition on how to react during the day to erotic dreams during the night; and Dadišo Qaṭṭāya, *comm* 11.6 (Draguet 1972: pp. 147-148), which is worth its weight in gold.

⁸⁴ Cassian, *conl* 22; cf., *inst* 6, *conl* 12

⁸⁵ In his foundational article on Evagrian dreams, Refoulé writes, (Refoulé 196: p. 488), 'Avant Évagre, le problème du rapport des rêves à la vie spirituelle ne semble avoir été posé que pour les rêves érotique et

concerns, or even basic concerns. This is unmistakably evident from his analysis of the relationships that obtain among the various sins.

Evagrius' hierarchy of temptations is quite different to what we probably expect. The three primary temptations are those with which Satan tempted Our Lord (Mt 4.1-11): gluttony, avarice and vainglory.⁸⁶ Until and unless a person is overcome by one of these, the other temptations do not arise. Other temptations are in this sense derivative. It is therefore noteworthy that lust is a 'second-order' temptation that does not beset the Christian until he has been overcome by gluttony.⁸⁷ So dreams of sexual impropriety will only beset the monk who has already fallen to the more basic temptation to consume.⁸⁸ Further evidence of the unexpected order in which he places the temptations comes when we read that demonic effort is focused particularly on the irascible element, the *thymos*,

d'avantage sous l'aspect moral que sous l'aspect proprement spirituelle.' This is an exaggeration: even if Antony's discussion is rooted in his physics, it nevertheless engages 'properly spiritual' concerns.

⁸⁶ Evagrius, *cog* 1, 17-25 (Géhin 1998: pp. 148-152, 208-244). In a fragment from his commentary on St Luke's Gospel, Origen notes that Mark and Luke record that 'for forty days He was tempted' (Mk 1.13; Lk 4.1-2). This, Origen writes, is 'so that is clear that during those days long ago he (sc., Satan) tempted Him by means of sleep, listlessness, cowardice and suchlike' (*FrLc* 96 (Rauer 1959: p. 265.2-3): ...ὥς εἶναι δῆλον, ὅτι ἐν ἐκείναις μὲν πόρρωθεν αὐτὸν ἐπείραζεν δι' ὕπνου, δι' ἀκηδίας, διὰ δειλίας καὶ τῶν τοιούτων). The ascetic setting of the Gospel narrative ('in the wilderness') makes it all the more interesting that Origen describes them using terms that are of great importance for subsequent monastic theology.

⁸⁷ Evagrius, *cog* 1.6-8 (Géhin 1998: p. 150): Οὐκ ἔστι γὰρ ἐμπεσεῖν εἰς χεῖρας πνεύματος πορνείας, μὴ ὑπὸ τῆς γαστρίμαργίας καταπεσόντα.

⁸⁸ Evagrius repeatedly links eating too much bread or drinking too much water to having 'shameful fantasies' (αἰσχροὶ φαντασίαι): *cog* 27.21 and cf. *cog* 43 (Géhin 1998: pp. 250, 298); *prak* 17 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.542); *Ad mon* 102 (Greibmann 1913: p. 162); at *adm par* 3 (Muyldermans 1952: p. 126), too much sleeping is included as well. See also Isaiah, *hom* 13.9 and esp. 15.60 (Draguet 1968: 1.179, 2.296); and *apoph* Poemen 132 (PG 65.336). Physiological concerns come into play here, but it is clear that Evagrius is no less concerned about a psychological point. This is shown by the ease with which Evagrius expands his list of things to avoid to include eating bread or sleeping in. A monk who drinks to satiety is prone to self-gratification. In respect of what sort of dreams he has, this is no less important than what excessive moisture (or the pressure of a full bladder: cf. Cassian, *conl* 12.9, 12.11.4) does to a sleeping man: e.g., *rer mon rat* 8 (PG 40.1260): Μὴ γίνου ἐπιθυμητῆς βρωμάτων καλῶν, καὶ τῶν κατὰ τὴν σπατάλην ἀπατῶν. «Ἡ γὰρ σπαταλῶσα, ζῶσα τέθνηκεν,» ὡς καὶ ὁ Απόστολός φησι. Μὴ χορτάσης τὴν κοιλίαν σου ἐν βρώμασιν ἀλλοτρίων, ἵνα μὴ πόθος σοι τούτων γένηται, καὶ περὶ τὰς ἔξω τραπέζας ἐμποιήσῃ σοι τὸν πόθον. Εἴρηται γάρ «Μὴ ἀπατᾶσθε χορτασίᾳ κοιλίας.» Cf. Quintus Cicero's observations, *diu* 1.29.60, 1.53.121 (Pease 1963: pp. 199, 316): 'Nunc onusti cibo et vino perturbata et confusa cernimus [sc., in somnis]'; '...qui se tradit quieti praeparato animo cum bonis cogitationibus tum rebus ad tranquillitatem adcommodatis certa et vera cernit in somnis...' (NB: The *CPG* classifies *adm par* (it. 2472) among the 'dubia et spuria'; however, no reason for this classification being given, we defer to Muyldermans's authority.)

by day and by night, because misdirected anger is especially devastating to the ascetic.⁸⁹

Though Evagrius does not refer here to dreams of anger, we are reminded of the discussion in Plato's *Republic* 9 of the tyrannical person whose degeneration begins with dreams of violence before spreading to violent deeds.⁹⁰ Evagrius also teaches that fear causes troublesome dreams.⁹¹ Clearly, dreams can be of a pernicious sort, without being at all erotic.⁹²

The significance of these tempting dreams, then, lies not in which of the monk's faculties they assault. As Fr. Gabriel Bunge observes, 'Here, the dreams offer indications of the "health of the soul" or its "sickness", no more.'⁹³ Resorting to a different metaphor, we might say that dreams are important by virtue of their potential to fragment the monk's spiritual integrity. Since the spiritual integrity of a Christian is profoundly communitarian,⁹⁴ these temptations when effective have the consequence of severing the monk's connections to the community. To return to the specific problem of nocturnal emissions, we know that a great deal of consideration was given to this issue by the early Church to decide whether a man could receive communion after such an event.⁹⁵ But

⁸⁹ Evagrius, *cog* 5 (Géhin 1998: pp. 166-170)

⁹⁰ Plato, *R* 9 (574D9): αἱ [δόξαι] ... ὅναρ ἐλύοντο ἐν ὕπνῳ. In this text, there is no hint of sexual deviance. Cf. also John of Lycopolis, who tells of a perfected monk who has visions while working and *sleeping*; later, when he falls from perfection, the monk has trouble in his sleeping first, then in his waking: *HM* 1.49, 1.51-52 (Festugière 1961: pp. 28-30).

⁹¹ Evagrius, *prak* 11 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.516-518); *cog* 4 (Géhin 1998: pp. 162-164)

⁹² Thus, Evagrius, *prak* 54 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.624-626); *cog* 27-28 (Géhin 1998: pp. 248-254)

⁹³ Bunge 1996, p. 183: 'Mais on ne trouve pas chez lui (sc., Évagre) une "interprétation des rêves" suivie, à la manière antique ou moderne, en fonction de leur contenu. Ici, les rêves offrent des indications sur la "santé de l'âme" (*Pr[ak]*, 56) ou sur sa "maladie", sans plus.'

⁹⁴ This ideal is an application of the 'Great High-Priestly Prayer', Jn 17.21; for Evagrius' use of this passage, see chiefly his *sch* 25 in Eccl. 4.4 (Géhin 1993: p. 100; Géhin's notes at that point refer the reader to other citations in Evagrius' works), where he finds implications in the verse for ethics and monastic society.

⁹⁵ *Const App* 6.27 passim (Metzger 1985-1987: 2.378-382); Athanasius, *ep Amoun* (PG 26.1169-1176); Balsamon's commentary on Theodore of Alexandria (PG 138.898); Basil, *reg br̅eu* 309 (PG 31.1301-1304); *Did* 26 (Vööbus 1978-1979: 2.241-265); Dionysius of Alexandria, *ep can* 4 (PG 10.1288), as well as Balsamon's and Zonaras' commentaries thereon (PG 10.1288-1289). Nemesis does not directly treat the

This interpretation of Evagrius' *scholia* is bolstered by evidence from his scholia *On the Psalms*.¹⁰⁰ Let us consider his remarks on the verse just partially cited, Ps. 126/7.2: 'It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so He gives to His beloved sleep.' Thus, Evagrius explains, 'Just as sleep separates us from sensations, so too does the knowledge of God.' 'Just as when we sleep we are not aware that we sleep, so too when we contemplate we are not aware that we contemplate.' 'If activity has the character of bread, but sleep, that of knowledge, sleep fittingly comes to us after the eating of the bread of sorrow; for only the knowledge of God by its nature soothes the weariness of activity.' 'If sleep usually warms the body, knowledge is fittingly called sleep; for it makes every creature possessing it ardent in the spirit.' And, finally, 'Just as sleep, digesting food by stomach juices, makes the body grow, so too does knowledge make the soul grow, teaching it the reasons for activity.'¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Hans Urs von Balthasar (1939a) ascribed the authorship of this material to Evagrius on the basis of Wilhelm Bousset's observations (1932; reprint 1969). Marie-Josèphe Rondeau provided a more secure foundation for his claim: Rondeau 1960; Rondeau 1982, pp. 203-299. They have marshaled impressive arguments to support this claim. But recently, Róbert Somos (1999) has offered seven sober and judicious principles in support of maintaining the traditional identification of Origen as the author of a comparable commentary on Proverbs. His arguments occasionally hearken back to Bousset (e.g., his pointed question, p. 366: 'Why would it be strange that an Origenist uses Origen?'). Many of his observations were already conceded by Rondeau. (E.g., Rondeau 1960, p. 325: 'La solution de ce problème est rendue délicate par l'ignorance quasi absolue où nous sommes encore de l'exégèse origénienne du psautier, tout spécialement des *scholies*.') In the end, the case made by von Balthasar and Rondeau is persuasive and coherent, but unproven. It remains possible (if unpopular) to hold with Bousset that Origen had anticipated, even inspired, Evagrius here. However, for the purposes of the present thesis, the arguments of Balthasar and Rondeau are accepted and the scholia are attributed to Evagrius.

¹⁰¹ (ps- ?) Origen, *sel in Ps* 126.2 (PG 12.1644): Ὡςπερ ὁ ὕπνος ἀφίστησιν ἡμᾶς τῶν αἰσθητῶν, οὕτω καὶ ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ θεωρία τῶν αὐτῶν ἀφίστησι. Τοῦ αὐτοῦ. Ὡςπερ ὑπνοῦντες οὐδ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο γινώσκουμεν, ὅτι ὑπνοῦμεν, οὕτως καὶ θεωροῦντες μὴδ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο ὅτι ἐν θεωρίᾳ γεγόναμεν. Τοῦ αὐτοῦ. Εἰ ἡ πρακτικὴ ἄρτου λόγον ἐπέχει, ὁ δὲ ὕπνος τῆς γνώσεως, καλῶς μετὰ τὴν βρώσιν τοῦ ἄρτου τῆς ὁδύνης δίδεται ἡμῖν ὁ ὕπνος μόνῃ γὰρ ἡ γνώσις τοῦ Θεοῦ πέφυκε λύειν τὸν κάματον τῆς πρακτικῆς. Τοῦ αὐτοῦ. Εἰ ὁ ὕπνος εἴωθε σῶμα θερμαίνειν, καλῶς ἡ γνώσις λέγεται ὕπνος· πάντας γὰρ τοὺς κεκτημένους αὐτὴν ποιεῖ τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντας. Τοῦ αὐτοῦ. Ὡςπερ ὁ ὕπνος πέπτωντὰς τροφὰς διὰ τῶν χυμῶν τρέφει τὸ σῶμα, οὕτω καὶ ἡ γνώσις τρέφει τὴν ψυχὴν, τοὺς τῆς πρακτικῆς αὐτὴν λόγους διδάσκουσα. According to Balthasar, the phrases ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ θεωρία and ἡ γνώσις τοῦ Θεοῦ in this passage indicate that Origen did not write it; von Balthasar 1939a, p. 98: 'Daß es bei Origenes keine θεωρία τῆς ἁγίας Τριάδος gibt, ist klar, da ja vom Logos und vom Vater nie als dem gleichen Schauobjekt die Rede ist (geschweige denn vom Hl. Geist).' The same applies to the recurrent term, πρακτικὴ. Balthasar (p. 186) similarly finds the Evagrian theory of ἀπέραντος ἀγνωσία exemplified in *sel in Ps* 127.1 (ibid; and cf. KG 1.38); see also the fundamental studies by Hausherr on this topic: Hausherr 1936 and Hausherr 1959. Even though only the second clause occurs

The ascetic content of this passage is manifest. It is therefore important to note the juxtaposition of ascetic struggle and divine grace that we have just seen in the results of Evagrius' engaging this text. On the one hand, we must not presume that God's grace will render our efforts unnecessary. On the other hand, nor must we forget that our efforts are woefully ineffectual without the sustaining grace of God. But Abba Evagrius' concerns lie elsewhere, as is revealed in the *Master's discussion with his disciple*.¹⁰² The merit of this text is sufficient to justify including it here in full, and its length is such as to make this possible.

The teacher said, 'Why are you grieved in your mind¹⁰³ or saddened, even though you, when you sleep, do not make an end to the search for wisdom?'¹⁰⁴ The disciple said, 'And how shall this be? For lo, when I sleep, I am like one dead. And how shall I search when I sleep? For behold, I am a partaker of death.' The teacher said, 'Put good and sober habits in your soul by its vigilance. Bind it with bitter weeping. Make it partake of knowledge.¹⁰⁵ Accustom it to purified thoughts. Apply it to the discernment of reason.¹⁰⁶ Do not stop it from reflection upon the virtues. Urge it to the meditation of righteousness. Incite it to pursue the trustworthy desire. Commit¹⁰⁷ it to the finding of wisdom. When it is at rest the intellect is like movement in the works of vigilance. In your sleep, it produces a sweet fragrance within your mind. Your tongue yields a voice from the mind's taste of vigilance. That you may understand how great is the might of asceticism,¹⁰⁸ even in the torpor of the flesh, trustworthy habits overcome and rule it so that you are not like those sleeping, and truly far from the dead, even if inferior to those keeping vigil.' The disciple said, 'You have calmed my soul by your declaration. But nevertheless, is it possible that I am not like those sleeping, and truly far from the dead, even if inferior to those keeping vigil?' The teacher said, 'Be vigilant with regard to your

in Mlle. Rondeau's version and the rest are lacking from *Vat gr 754* (see in *Ps 126.2γ*), I include it as Evagrius on the strength of Balthasar's observations.

¹⁰² Muyldermans 1952, pp. 123-124. Cf. van den Ven 1908. The *CPG* classifies this work (it. 2470) among the 'dubia et spuria', without offering evidence in support of this classification. Once more, we defer to Muyldermans's authority.

¹⁰³ Lit., 'in your eyes': ܡܢ ܥܝܢܝܐ

¹⁰⁴ ܡܢ ܡܢܬܐ (=σοφία)

¹⁰⁵ ܡܢ ܡܢܬܐ (=γνῶσις)

¹⁰⁶ ܡܢ ܡܢܬܐ (=λόγος)

¹⁰⁷ Lit., 'unite it': ܡܢ ܡܢܬܐ

Evagrius' are not the only dreams that Palladius relates, and indeed others of them are closer to the paradigmatic cases elucidated by Evagrian theology. Such are the cases of Pachomius, Palladius himself, his anonymous companion, Elias, and Moses the Ethiopian. Some of these cases are relatively colourless. For example, Palladius relates that he, like Pachomius, was troubled with desire for a woman by thoughts and nocturnal fantasies.¹¹⁸ So great is the purity of Palladius' anonymous colleague that he has never had 'experience' (πεῖραν) with a woman – not even κατ' ὄναρ!¹¹⁹ Elias' tale is more intriguing: in a dream, three angels castrate him so that he may more effectively minister to a convent. After this, he is unmoved by lust – a testament to the efficacy of events that take place in dreams.¹²⁰ But the tale that most clearly indicates Palladius' knowledge of and dependence upon Evagrian theory is that of Moses.¹²¹

Moses is plagued by demons trying to entice him into his old ways,¹²² that is, brigandage. Moses undertook a stricter regime to combat the demons, but Palladius says that because of the demonic onslaught Moses 'remained yet ablaze and dreaming'.¹²³ As Moses perceptively tells Isidore of Skete, these dreams come from his former habits of 'pleasures', presumably drunkenness and violence being chief among these.¹²⁴ Though his asceticism increased, 'he could not purge his mind of fantasies about these things'.¹²⁵ One night, a demon assaults him so violently that he is ill for a year. An anonymous

misericors et humilis; tuam cogitationem recte in Domino ponas et super hæc omnia princeps eris.») In taking *principatus* as 'understanding,' I follow de Vogüé: see Bunge 1994a, p.164.

¹¹⁸ Palladius, *HL* 23.1 (Bartelink 1974: p. 128)

¹¹⁹ Palladius, *HL* 71.2.16-19 (Bartelink 1974: p. 288)

¹²⁰ Palladius, *HL* 29 (Bartelink 1974: pp. 144-146)

¹²¹ Palladius, *HL* 19.5-11 (Bartelink 1974: pp. 98-102)

¹²² Palladius, *HL* 19.5.39-40 (Bartelink 1974: p. 98): Τουτῷ τῷ Μωσεὶ ἐπέθεντο δαίμονες εἰς τὴν συνήθειαν τῆς ἀκολασίας τῆς πορνικῆς κατελαύνοντες.

¹²³ Palladius, *HL* 19.6.54 (Bartelink 1974: p. 100): ἔμεινε πυρούμενος ἔτι καὶ ἐνυπνιαζόμενος.

¹²⁴ Palladius, *HL* 19.7.55-57 (Bartelink 1974: p. 100): Τί ποιήσω ὅτι σκοτίζουσί μου τὸν λογισμὸν τὰ ἐνύπνια τῆς ψυχῆς κατὰ συνήθειαν ἡδονῆς.

¹²⁵ Palladius, *HL* 19.7.57-59 (Bartelink 1974: p. 100): Ἐπειδὴ τὸν νοῦν σου οὐκ ἀπέστητας τῶν περὶ

brother took Moses to Isidore the priest, who bade him stop struggling with the demons, saying, ‘There are limits to valour even in asceticism.’¹²⁶ Moses refuses to desist before his ‘fantasy of demons’ abates; to which Isidore responds, ‘In the name of Jesus Christ, your dreams have vanished: commune with boldness, since for your own good you were dominated, lest you should boast of being superior to passions.’¹²⁷ And so the dreams ended. The tale is therefore typical of the cautionary theme announced in Preface, 6, *On the dangers of Pride*. It is noteworthy that Moses was unable to cope with the demonic assaults of his dreams, and was cured in the end by God.

- The diagnosis of Cassian’s oneirology

It is in such a context that Cassian’s writings on dreams must be understood. In fact, when we read Cassian’s works, it becomes clear that they are in continuity with this tradition. Thus, he adheres to the classic three-fold scheme of classification established since Philo.¹²⁸ Twice he commends vigils as an appropriate and necessary measure against the enormous power that the demons exercise by night against the monks, in terms reminiscent of Palamon’s warning to Pachomius, for sleep is ‘a most fraudulent

ταῦτα, τούτου χάριν ὑφίστασαι τοῦτο.

¹²⁶ Palladius, *HL* 19.10.81-82 (Bartelink 1974: pp. 100-102): μέτρα γὰρ εἰσι καὶ τῆς ἀνδρείας τῆς ἐν τῇ ἀσκήσει.

¹²⁷ Palladius, *HL* 19.10.84-87 (Bartelink 1974: p. 102): Ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πέπαυταί σου τὰ ἐνύπνια· κοινωνήσον οὖν μετὰ παρρησίας· ἵνα γὰρ μὴ καυχῇσθῃ ὡς περιγεγόμενος πάθους, τούτου χάριν κατεδυναστεύθης πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον. Isidore’s injunction, particularly the imperative verb, κοινωνήσον, suggests that Moses was abstaining from communion. It is therefore plausible that his dreams were sexual or involved seminal emissions. However, nowhere in the text are his temptations identified as being sexual, and as we have seen above it is entirely possible that diabolical dreams could involve other sorts of temptation.

¹²⁸ See Behr 1968, pp. 174-175.

deceiver of purity and a rival and adversary to chastity'.¹²⁹ Like Evagrius, Isaac, and Poemen, Cassian is keenly aware of the dangers to chastity posed by too much food, drink or sleep.¹³⁰ He too links lust and carnal vice to the instant gratification of physical desires in a way that is instructive for us who live in an acquisitive, consumer culture.¹³¹ But Cassian no more morbidly fears sleep and its concomitant loss of control than did other monastic theologians: for him, too, the spiritually advanced commune with God even during sleep.¹³² This is evidence of an important trend, from Clement's talking about the sleep of the gnostic, through Evagrius' sleeping prayer, thence to Cassian's chaste sleep. As with Origen and Evagrius, so too Cassian's sophisticated perspective on sleeping proves useful for him in scriptural exegesis and moral exhortation.¹³³

Cassian treats the subject of dreams most thoroughly, however, in the context of discussing chastity and purity. This comes as no surprise inasmuch as sexual dreams provoke a serious crisis for monastic theologians. Cassian was willing to treat the problems arising from such dreams with great candour, to the extent that only recently has a complete translation of his writings on this topic appeared in English.¹³⁴ The appearance of an unabridged translation has been greatly expedited, no doubt, by the attention given Cassian's writings on sexuality by two giants of the modern intellectual

¹²⁹ Cassian, *conl* 12.4.3: 'deceptor fraudulentissimus puritatis et aemulus atque contrarius castitati'; cf. *inst* 2.13.1; *conl* 2.8.1, 7.23.1

¹³⁰ Cassian, *inst* 5.20, 5.26; cf. *conl* 12.15.2, 22.3.1-2, 22.6.5

¹³¹ Cassian, *inst* 5.20: 'Qui enim gulae superfluos adpetitus inhibere non potuit, quomodo aestus carnalis concupiscentiae ualebit extinguere? Et qui non quiuit passiones in propatulo sitas paruasque conpescere, quemadmodum occultas nulloque hominum teste prurientes moderatrice discretione poterit debellare?'

¹³² Cassian, *conl* 4.2: '...oratio quoque pura emitteretur ac prompta et mens plena spiritalibus fructibus preces suas efficaces ac leues etiam per soporem supplicans ad deum peruenire sentiret...'; cf. 10.10.15.

¹³³ Cassian, *inst* 10.21.2, *conl* 4.5, 9.26.2, 12.12.6

¹³⁴ Edgar Gibson's translation, (reprint: 1982), omitted Conferences 12 and 22. Terrence G. Kardong, (Kardong 1993), provided a translation of the missing texts with a valuable introduction, but his booklet is not easily available. Recently Boniface Ramsey, OP, (Ramsey 1997), has produced a wonderfully readable, unexpurgated translation of Cassian's monastic works.

world, Michel Foucault and Peter Brown. This is commendable since it has called to the attention of the academic world the importance of these writings.

Now of course Foucault was a philosopher and critic, and Brown is a social historian, and their explorations of Cassian's works reflect their respective methodologies and concerns. But it can be noted in all fairness that neither scholar in his treatment of Cassian focused on the theological implications of the material. Indeed, only hints and suggestions at an integrated theological consideration of Cassian on erotic dreams have been forthcoming.¹³⁵ This is a pity, since Cassian himself provides a very broad hint that he meant these writings to be taken as furthering his theological programme. In the first place, since Cassian specifies that the second set of Conferences were written to clarify whatever in the earlier writings was obscure or incomplete on the topic of perfection,¹³⁶ he invites his reader to expect that the theological dimension of these seven Conferences is paramount. The first conference to deal with erotic dreams and nocturnal emissions is Conference 11, 'On perfection'. When Chaeremon concludes this discourse, Germanus asks to learn about 'the goal of chastity'.¹³⁷ Chaeremon puts off this discussion until the following day, but only after offering a foretaste of the teaching he will disclose. Significantly, he anticipates here not only the subject of Conference 12, chastity, but also that of Conference 13, divine protection.¹³⁸ By anchoring his discussion of chastity and

¹³⁵ The best treatment to date is that of Stewart, 1998, pp. 62-84. See also Kardong 1993, pp. 7-20; and Russell 1992.

¹³⁶ Cassian, pref *conl* 11: '...nunc, ut etiam itineris nostri ratio cognoscatur, trium in alia heremo consistentium quos primos uidimus patrum septem conlationes pari conscriptas stilo uobis crediti consecrandas, quibus ea, quae de perfectione in praeteritis opusculis nostris obscurius forsitan comprehensa uel praetermissa sunt, suppleantur.'

¹³⁷ Cassian, *conl* 11.14: 'Quia de perfectione caritatis sermo digestus est, uolumus etiam *de castitatis fine aliqua* liberius sciscitari...' (emp. added)

¹³⁸ Cassian, *conl* 11.15: 'Summae quidem beatitudinis ac singularis est meriti ita istum per quem domino cohaeremus affectum uel discere iugiter uel docere, ut *meditatio eius secundum psalmographi sententiam omnes uitae nostrae dies noctesque consumat et mentem nostram insatiabiliter esurientem sitientemque*

erotic dreams in the bedrock of this terminology ('goal', 'perfection', 'providence').

Cassian clearly intended his audience to be prepared for its theological implications. This is best appreciated by considering what Cassian meant by chastity. Once we have a sense for the role Cassian assigns chastity, it will be much easier to recognise how the Christian's dreaming functions as shorthand for life in general in Cassian's scheme.

Chastity is the virtue *par excellence*, and is given pride of place among the other virtues.¹³⁹ It is an important goal in Christian progress, leading to the ultimate goal of godly love.¹⁴⁰ Abba Serenus, a virtual incarnation of chastity, exemplifies this in his passing beyond chastity through ardent love for God.¹⁴¹ In the Conferences, chastity is variously described as integrity of heart,¹⁴² the Kingdom of God,¹⁴³ holiness itself,¹⁴⁴ love and delight in love's purity,¹⁴⁵ the perpetual calm of security¹⁴⁶ and peace.¹⁴⁷ Insofar as chastity is love and delight and peace, it is clear that chastity is not an anxiety-plagued

iustitiam caelestis huius cibi perpetua ruminatio sustentet [cf. *conl* 12]. Sed consulendum est etiam iumento corporis nostri *secundum benignissimam saluatoris nostri providentiam* [cf. *conl* 13.8.1, 13.8.3], ne deficiat in uia: spiritus enim promptus, caro autem infirma. Quae etiam nunc uel exigui cibi perceptione curanda est, ut post refectionem eius etiam ad ea quae desideratis diligentius indaganda mentis quoque addatur intentio' (emp. added). Cassian does not use the term 'providence' promiscuously. It only occurs twice after this passage, in *conl* 13, to describe God's care for His people. It also occurs in the following passages: *inst* 7.3.2, 8.4.2, 12.18; *conl* 3.19.1, 3.19.4, 5.19.4, 7.30.1 (*providente*); 8.7.2, 8.12.1, 10.11.5. This short passage supports Adalbert de Vogüé's brilliant conjecture that Chaeremon's three conferences are mutually illuminating: de Vogüé 1979, pp. 268, 270.

¹³⁹ Cassian, *conl* 23.2.2

¹⁴⁰ Cassian, *inst* 8.22; *conl* 4.16.1, 14.16.7-9. Here we are reminded of the important distinction between *telos* and *scopos*; see Marsili 1936, pp. 106-107.

¹⁴¹ Cassian, *conl* 7.2; cf. 11.8.1, 11.8.4, 12.4.2-3

¹⁴² Cassian, *inst* 6.19: 'In tantum intellexit incorruptionem carnis non tam in mulieris esse abstinencia quam in integritate cordis, quae uere incorruptam perpetuo sanctimoniam corporis uel timore Dei uel castitatis amore custodit.'

¹⁴³ Cassian, *conl* 9.19: 'Secunda petitio mentis purissimae aduenire iam iamque regnum sui patris exoptat, uel istud scilicet quo cotidie Christus regnat in sanctis (quod ita fit, cum diaboli imperio per extinctionem foetentium uitiorum de nostris cordibus pulso deus in nobis per uirtutum bonam fragrantiam coeperit dominari et deuicta fornicatione castitas, superato furore tranquillitas, calcata superbia humilitas in nostra mente regnauerit)...'

¹⁴⁴ Cassian, *conl* 12.11.1: 'Haec est enim uerae consummatio castitatis, quae non inpugnans carnalis concupiscentiae motus, sed toto horrore detestans iugem atque inuiolabilem sui retinet puritatem nec potest aliud quid esse quam sanctitas.'

¹⁴⁵ Cassian, *conl* 12.10.1: 'Porro castitas ... amore sui et propriae puritatis delectatione subsistit.'

¹⁴⁶ Cassian, *conl* 12.10.2: 'perpetuam securitatis quietem'

defence thrown up against impurity.¹⁴⁷ It occurs in seven grades, the highest of which is ‘obviously heavenly, even angelic’ and is therefore so exceptional that Chaeremon sets it apart from the other six.¹⁴⁸ Chastity links the inner disposition of the mind to the outward display of action.¹⁴⁹ Borrowing from the psalmist, Cassian thus describes the flesh and spirit as ‘brothers in unity’.¹⁵⁰ The chaste monk is therefore characterised by an extraordinary integrity. In what may be taken as a definition of the monk, Cassian states, ‘Therefore the whole of the monk’s attention must be ever fixed on one thing... namely, the recollection of God’.¹⁵¹ Because this linkage of body and spirit is bilateral, it is possible to cultivate ‘integrity of the mind’¹⁵² by following an ascetic regime.¹⁵³ As Cassian dryly states, ‘Never, then, can one who is incapable of curbing the desires of gluttony, check the goads of burning desire. The chastity of the inner man is recognised

¹⁴⁷ Cassian, *conl* 12.6.3, 12.6.5, 12.11.4

¹⁴⁸ Cassian, *conl* 12.10.1: ‘Porro castitas non ut arbitramini districtiois praesidio, sed amore sui et propriae puritatis delectatione subsistit. Non enim castitas, sed continentia dicitur, ubi adhuc ei aliqua resistit aduersitas uoluptatis.’ Taking this claim seriously protects us against thinking too readily of purity as just the opposition of contamination. In recent Anglo-American scholarship, this reflects the enthusiastic application of Mary Douglas’s anthropological constructs about purity and contamination, e.g., Douglas 1996 and Douglas 1966. Useful as this anthropological corrective is, it can be easily overextended; see, e.g., Brakke 1995.

¹⁴⁹ Cassian, *conl* 12.7.2-6; the quotation is from Germanus, *conl* 12.14: ‘Quoniam nos admiratio non humanae huius neque terrena, sed plane caelestis atque angelicae castitatis ita subito stupore confudit...’

¹⁵⁰ Cassian, *conl* 13.5.2: ‘hanc... internam mentis ac perpetuam corporis puritatem’; cf. *inst* 6.16-17; *conl* 21.36.1-2, 22.6.10

¹⁵¹ Cassian, *conl* 12.11.1 (quoting Ps 133.1): ‘secundum psalmographi sententiam habitauerint fratres in unum’. Elsewhere, when Cassian applies this image to the more concrete example of cenobitic monks, he stresses that it must be understood ‘not spatially, but spiritually’ (*conl* 16.3.5: ‘Quod non localiter, sed spiritaliter oportet intellegi’).

¹⁵² Cassian, *conl* 24.6.1: ‘Quamobrem ita monachi omnis intentio in unum semper est defigenda cunctarumque cogitationum eius ortus atque circuitus in id ipsum, id est ad memoriam dei strenue reuocandi, uelut si quis teretis absidiae cameram uolens in sublime concludere subtilissimi illius centri lineam iugiter circumducatur ac secundum illius certissimam normam omnem rutunditatis parilitatem structurae colligat disciplina’. Antoine Guillaumont provides this helpful gloss: ‘Le moine est celui qui veut unifier sa vie, c’est-à-dire qui renonce à tout ce qui est source de division, de partage, non seulement dans ses activités extérieures, mais aussi – et d’abord – dans sa vie psychologique.’ (Guillaumont 1979, p. 83)

¹⁵³ Cassian, *conl* 12.2.5: ‘Quibus manifestissime conprobatur ad perfectionem puritatis castimoniam continentiae corporalis solam non posse sufficere, nisi etiam mentis addatur integritas.’ Cf. *inst* 6.8 (‘*animae castitatem*’).

¹⁵⁴ Cassian, *inst* 5.7, 5.9; *conl* 4.12.4, 14.16.7-9

by the consummation of this virtue.’¹⁵⁵ A scriptural passage provides Cassian with a ready context for chastity within the ascetic life: ‘And the blessed Apostle also teaches this attaining unto spiritual knowledge by the order we preach. For when he wanted not simply to compose a list of his every virtue, but also to expound the order of them, so as to explain which followed which and which produced which, after some others he sets forth, “...in vigils, in fasts, in chastity, in knowledge, in the Holy Ghost, in love unfeigned...”’¹⁵⁶

The monk who has accomplished this has ‘attained to the boundaries of flesh and spirit.’¹⁵⁷ Such is the chaste monk, who is imperturbable, even when he is confronted by the grossness of bodily functions. In consequence, biological necessities can be unpleasant without being spiritually cataclysmic.¹⁵⁸ On this basis, Cassian was prepared to accept the discharge of semen as a normal physiological function – even for the chaste. This process he describes thus: ‘this bodily condition discharges the exigencies of nature and does not provoke lust, expelling the superabundant fluid without any arousal and no harm, not provoking a battle for chastity.’¹⁵⁹ For the pure, then, the emission of semen is

¹⁵⁵ Cassian, *inst* 5.11.1: ‘Numquam igitur poterit ardentis concupiscentiae stimulos inhibere, quisque desideria gulae refrenare non quiverit. Interioris hominis castitas uirtutis huius consummatione discernitur.’

¹⁵⁶ Cassian, *conl* 14.16.7-9: ‘Hoc autem quo praediximus ordine ad spiritalem scientiam perueniri etiam beatus apostolus docet. Nam cum uniuersarum uirtutum suarum non solum catalogum texere, uerum etiam ordinem earum uellet exponere, ut quae quam sequeretur uel quae quam parturiret exprimeret, post aliquanta intulit dicens : in uigiliis, in ieiuniis, in castitate, in scientia, in longanimitate, in suauitate, in spiritu sancto, in caritate non ficta.’ See 2 Cor 6.5-6. A preliminary sketch of this progression can be found at *inst* 6.18.

¹⁵⁷ Cassian, *conl* 12.8.1: ‘...per experientiam longam et puritatem cordis ad confinia carnis ac spiritus uerbo domini dirigente peruenerit.’

¹⁵⁸ That Cassian considered nocturnal emissions of semen to be biologically necessary is established at *inst* 6.20 and *conl* 12.7.6. The language of the latter passage reveals that Cassian found such occurrences repugnant.

¹⁵⁹ Cassian, *inst* 6.22: ‘...donec ista carnis condicio necessitatem naturae expleat, non suscitet uoluptatem, concretam exuberantiam sine ullo pruritu noxaeque propellens, non pugnam suscitans castitati.’ Cf. *conl* 12.7.4, 22.6.5.

a natural and unconscious biological event, their purity insuring that no fantasies occur.¹⁶⁰

So for the chaste, the intermittent necessities of the body pose no acute moral problems.

Of such a one, it can truly be said that ‘he is found the same by night as by day, in bed as at prayer, alone as when surrounded by a crowd’.¹⁶¹

Thus, the perfect progress in virtue. But actual progress in virtue is more frequently fitful. One of the commonest reversals to occur is the fall of an advanced ascetic to pride. Evagrius memorably describes this process in his *Praktikos*: ‘I have known the demon of vainglory, pursued by nearly all the other demons, shamelessly to draw near after the fall of his pursuers and to recount to the monk the greatness of his virtues.’¹⁶² In his discussion of chastity, Cassian acknowledges a comparable temptation to vainglory. ‘Therefore, for any of us who wrangle against the spirit of fornication with all our might, it is a singular victory not to hope for reprieve on account of one’s efforts. This faith might seem easy and obvious to everyone, yet nonetheless it is kept by beginners with as much difficulty as the perfection of chastity itself is. For when even a bit of purity smiles on them, at once while a certain elation subtly glides in they flatter themselves in their heart of hearts, thinking that they must have accomplished it by the

¹⁶⁰ E.g., Cassian, *inst* 6.10 (‘nulla imago’), 6.20 (‘nobis inconsciis’)

¹⁶¹ Cassian, *conl* 12.8.5: ‘Et ideo quisquis ad illum puritatis statum iugi cordis intentione peruenerit, ut iam mente ab huius passionis titillatione penitus absoluta per soporem caro eius uelut redundantiam superflui umoris expellat, condicionem modumque naturae certissime deprehendet, et ita cum expergefactus inuenerit carnem suam post longa tempora se inscio atque ignorante pollutam, tum demum de naturali necessitate causetur, ad illum sine dubio perueniens statum, ut talis inueniatur in nocte qualis in die, talis in lecto qualis in oratione, talis solus qualis turbis hominum circumsaepus, postremo ut numquam se talem secretus aspiciat, qualem uideri ab hominibus erubescit, nec in eo tale aliquid ineuitabilis ille oculus deprehendat, quod ab humanis aspectibus uelit esse celatum.’ Cf. Hippolytus, *can arab* 27 (Coquin 1966: pp. 394-396).

¹⁶² Evagrius, *prak* 31 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.572): Ἐγνων τὸν τῆς κενοδοξίας δαίμονα σχεδὸν ὑπὸ πάντων διωκόμενον τῶν δαιμόνων καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς τῶν διωκόντων πτώμασιν ἀναιδῶς παριστάμενον καὶ τῷ μοναχῷ μέγεθος ἀρετῶν ἐμφανίζοντα. Cf. *ibid.* 30 (p. 570), which expresses the same principle more straightforwardly.

zeal of their diligence...’¹⁶³ It is just when the monk comes to this pass that the biological inevitability he thought he had conquered will humble him.¹⁶⁴ The emission of semen is especially problematic for a monk with this understanding of his spiritual progress.¹⁶⁵ And though this may seem like an awful defeat, the persevering monk will find in it a great mercy. By humbling the proud, God calls them back to Himself.¹⁶⁶

Let us consider a monk who has had such a fall. His pride is humbled by bringing to the attention of the elders, in a spirit of repentance and contrition, his shortcoming.¹⁶⁷ When he exposes his problem to their minute examination, they are able to search out and treat his secret sins because of their experience and familiarity with the wiles of the demons.¹⁶⁸ With recourse to the accumulated wisdom of the advanced, our monk finds help in extirpating the deep-rooted habits of sin.¹⁶⁹ This therapy of expressing hidden faults and receiving support and advice from those who have the knowledge of experience is one of the most wholesome aspects of Cassian’s cenobitic community. In the particular case of nocturnal emissions, the humbled monk is likely to reveal to the elders the concealed sin of lust. This sin is made evident by erotic dreams, since any

¹⁶³ Cassian, *conl* 12.16.1, ‘Proinde unicuique nostrum aduersus spiritum fornicationis totis uiribus desudanti uictoria singularis est de merito conatus sui remedium non sperare. Quae fides licet facilis ac plana omnibus uideatur, tamen tam difficile ab incipientibus quam ipsius castitatis perfectio possidetur. Nam cum eis uel particula puritatis adriserit, continuo in conscientiae suae secretis elatione quadam subtiliter inlabente sibimet blandiuntur, credentesque eam se diligentiae suae studio consecutos necesse est...’

¹⁶⁴ Cassian, *conl* 22.6.2

¹⁶⁵ Cassian, *conl* 12.9: ‘Primum ergo est, quod per somni quietem mentis uigore laxato obseruari nequaquam ualeat illius conmotionis obreptio ...’ Germanus represents this perspective, and Chaeremon painstakingly leads him beyond it.

¹⁶⁶ Cassian, *conl* 4.15.1-2; cf. *conl* 12.6.7. See also Beaudry study of Cassian’s doctrine of humility, (Beaudry 1967: esp. pp. 60-85, 119-124).

¹⁶⁷ The famous case of the brother who had a nocturnal emission every evening before he intended to receive the Eucharist is a case study of this discernment in action: *conl* 22.6.1-4. A relevant antecedent exchange between Germanus and Theonas is recorded at *conl* 22.3.5, 22.4-5.5. The sin of nocturnal emission (or rather the sin revealed by such an emission; see below) is twice listed among those things for which repentance is needed: *conl* 20.12.2, 22.7.2-3.

¹⁶⁸ Chaeremon, *conl* 12.8.2-3, advances the claim on behalf of the chaste to judge in these cases.

image associated with the discharge of semen is ‘a token of secret lust’.¹⁷⁰ This lust can be fuelled by as many sources as there are thoughts during the day.¹⁷¹ And there is as much material at the disposal of the demons for the construction of these dreams as the monk has memories.¹⁷² This again calls our attention to the tightly bound psychosomatic unity that is the centre of Cassian’s teaching on chastity.¹⁷³ Sleep is a watchglass that focuses the mind’s purity. During the night-time, the mind of the monk is uninhibited by the various social pressures that hem in his bodily behaviour. And at the same time bodily activity provides the fodder for dreams. We noted that cooperation between flesh and spirit is according to Cassian the epitome of monastic chastity and that he often describes this chastity as fundamentally a sort of integrity. Because dreams give Cassian a forum in which to explore the fragmentation of this integrity, especially in the form of erotic dreams that are a betrayal of chastity, it is evident that he has significantly advanced the monastic teachings about dreams that he would have been exposed to in Egypt. There, as we have noted, accounts of dreams and dreaming are primarily ornamentation; sometimes the tales are ethically significant, but one is hard pressed to find an author before Evagrius in whose works dreams are invested with such psychological and theological importance. This indicates the profundity of Cassian’s

¹⁶⁹ As Ludwig Wrzół rightly notes, (Wrzół 1918-1922: p. 447), ‘Die Frage nach den Mitteln der Fixierung der Phantasie ist von besonderer Wichtigkeit für das Gebetsleben und *für den Kampf gegen innere Versuchungen*’ (emp. added).

¹⁷⁰ Cassian, *conl* 2.23.1: ‘Quod tamen sine ullo pruritu quietus egerat sopor, non fallax imago index occultae uoluptatis eliciat.’

¹⁷¹ Cassian, *inst* 6.11: ‘Qualitas enim cogitationum, quae distentionibus diei negligentius custoditur, probatur quiete nocturna.’ Cf. *inst* 6.23, 11.15.

¹⁷² Cassian, *conl* 12.7.4-5

¹⁷³ (Wrzół 1918-1922: p. 449), ‘Doch sind körperliche Reize, die in der Nacht selbst entstehen, ebenfalls geeignet, Träume zu erzeugen, so daß dann nicht der Traum die Ursache der körperlichen Erregung ist, sondern diese die Ursache des Traumes sind.’

teaching on dreams – which refers not simply to dreams, but to the whole of the Christian monastic life.

- Cassian's christology of grace

But we have left off with our hypothetical monk in a sorry state of affairs. Cassian would not have approved. So let us continue our examination to see in what ways the monk is able to gain the stable chastity that is indispensable for progress in virtue. Cassian's persistent teaching is that he can only do so by acknowledging his utter and total dependence upon God's grace. This calls for comment. What Cassian affirms is not that human perfection is impossible but for the grace of God – that claim is vacuous and practically tautological for a Christian. It is rather that within any Christian there are unfathomed pools, murky and foul, from whose depths troubling dreams bubble. As we shall see, the unreliable faculty of the will is of no enduring benefit in this situation. This awareness drives the ascetic to acknowledge the utter necessity of grace. In such cases when the ascetic in pride boasts of his presumed accomplishments, without acknowledging the universal need of grace, we may be sadly certain that he is sinking into one of those pools. It is only with an attitude of humility toward God that our monk is able to climb out.

Although this metaphor is not found in Cassian's writings, it nonetheless accurately represents what he taught, particularly about the capacity of human will and the debilitating effects and general pervasiveness of pride. For the sake of greater clarity, we will now consider exactly how he did set forth his doctrine of grace within the context

of dreams. From the outset, Cassian acknowledges that the state of chastity he describes appears to be ‘a condition surpassing human nature’.¹⁷⁴ Cassian does not then cunningly proceed (in duplicitous semi-Pelagian fashion)¹⁷⁵ to explain away this appearance, or forcefully transform it (in direct Pelagian style) into an opportunity for preaching moral improvement. Instead, Cassian reiterates his claim, saying that this chastity is only possible when God possesses the monk’s innermost parts.¹⁷⁶ When he makes this claim in *conl* 12 – the claim, significantly, that provokes Germanus’ incredulity and which in turn provokes the much-maligned *conl* 13¹⁷⁷ – he does not make it for the first time. Over several years,¹⁷⁸ Cassian had committed himself in writing to the utter necessity of grace. The earliest evidence for this assertion is found in the discussion on chastity in *inst* 6.6. Here Cassian tellingly writes, ‘In very truth, the grace and the victory in every progress of the virtues and eradication of all vices are the Lord’s. And in this case in particular the beneficence and extraordinary gift of God are most clearly declared by those who have deserved to possess it, according to the opinion of the fathers and the very experience of purification.’¹⁷⁹ He repeats this claim six books later when discussing

¹⁷⁴ Cassian, *conl* 12.8.6: ‘supra condicionem naturae uidetur humanae...’

¹⁷⁵ Their reputation for duplicity is attested in Prosper’s *ep ad Augustinum* 7 (PL 51.72). Prosper probably thought the Massilians were sneaky because he did not think they could simultaneously reject Pelagius and criticise Augustine. And yet this is precisely what Cassian did, as we will see. From Prosper’s writings, we are lead to think that the monks in question paid lip service to orthodoxy while maintaining – and even propagating – heterodox beliefs.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid: ‘Denique hoc ipsum, quia supra condicionem naturae uidetur humanae, qualiter obtinuerit idem propheta subiungit dicens : quia tu possedisti renes meos , id est, non industria mea neque uirtute hanc promerui puritatem, sed quia tu mortificasti insitum renibus meis libidinosae uoluptatis ardorem.’ Cassian here quotes Ps. 139.14. Codina (Codina 1966: p. 69), has noted that, because Cassian believed God is incorporeal, he should be taken very seriously when he talks of God possessing the monk’s innermost parts.

¹⁷⁷ See Cassian, *conl* 13.1-2, 13.4, 13.6.1.

¹⁷⁸ According to Petschenig, Cassian’s authorial career ran from c. 419-426 to c. 428-431 (Petschenig, (Petschenig 1886-1888: 2.x-xii), favours the latter date, since the first thing Cassian says in the preface to *inc* is that his *Conferences* are complete; see *inc* pref 1). This puts Cassian’s entire literary period well within the Pelagian controversy.

¹⁷⁹ Cassian, *inst* 6.6: ‘Et reuera cum in omnibus uirtutum profectibus et cunctorum expugnatione uitiorum Domini sit gratia atque uictoria, in hoc praecipue peculiare beneficium Dei ac speciale donum et patrum sententia et experimento purgationis ipsius manifestissime declaratur his, qui eam meruerint possidere.’

pride.¹⁸⁰ When Cassian discusses the relationship of the flesh and the spirit in *conl* 4, he unassumingly repeats the claim.¹⁸¹ Again, he emphatically states of Abba Serenus that his uncommon chastity is evidence of grace.¹⁸² In the second set of the Conferences, he returns to the example of Abba Serenus and once more repeats the theme.¹⁸³ So we see that Cassian regularly and repeatedly insisted on the necessity of grace for Christian integrity.

On the sure basis of these numerous claims, we can articulate Cassian's teaching on dreams as it relates to grace. Because Cassian talks of dreaming to capture specific aspects that are pervasive within the Christian life, he does not hesitate to ascribe chaste sleep to the grace of God. This is clear, for example, from one application of the monologistic prayer so dear to Abba Isaac. When temptation besets the sleeping Isaac so as to spoil his chastity, he calls out, *Deus in adiutorium meum intende: domine ad adiuuandum mihi festina!*¹⁸⁴ By beseeching divine mercy in this way, Isaac acknowledges his reliance on God's grace. Similarly, Abba Chaeremon is moved to remind Germanus and Cassian, as he gives them practical advice on how to attain to

¹⁸⁰ Cassian, *inst* 12.11.3: 'Nulla siquidem corporis huius adflictio nullaue cordis contritio ad capessendam ueram interioris hominis castitatem possit esse condigna, ut tantam puritatis uirtutem angelis solis ingenitam caelique uernaculam nudo humano labore, id est sine adiutorio Dei ualeat obtinere, quia totius boni effectus ab illius profluit gratia, qui tantam perennitatem beatitudinis et immensitatem gloriae exiguae uoluntati breuique ac paruo cursui nostro multiplicata largitate donauit.'

¹⁸¹ Cassian, *conl* 4.15.1: '... cum dei gratia concedente ita nos longo tempore genitali pollutione uiderimus immunes...'

¹⁸² Cassian, *conl* 7.1: 'Cui [sc., Sereno] supra omnes uirtutes, quae non solum in eius actu uel moribus, sed etiam in ipso uultu per dei gratiam refulgebant, ita est peculiari beneficio donum castitatis infusum, ut iam ne se ipsis quidem naturalibus incentiuis inquietari uel in sopore sentiret. Ad quam tamen carnis praecipuam puritatem quemadmodum gratia dei adminiculante peruenerit, quoniam supra condicionem naturae uidetur humanae, necessarium reor primitus explicare.'

¹⁸³ Cassian, *conl* 12.4.3

¹⁸⁴ Cassian, *conl* 10.10.9; this will be discussed in greater detail when we come to Cassian's teaching on prayer.

chastity, that ‘Unless the Lord build the house, those who build it labour in vain.’¹⁸⁵ In other words, the waking activity that is required to insure a chaste sleep is pointless unless the Lord accomplishes it. Cassian therefore teaches that a sleep free from diabolical fantasy results from the ‘protection of the Lord’, and is therefore a ‘boon’ from God.¹⁸⁶ For this reason, it is appropriate and necessary to give thanks to God upon arising from sleep.¹⁸⁷

When Cassian invokes divine aid as the only measure possible to surmount the difficulty of a fractured spirit, the claim about grace runs very deep indeed. This dispels any mistaken notion that Cassian relies on a ‘God of the gaps’ for explaining grace. Instead, he attributed to God’s grace the crucial role of binding together in a harmonious unity the body and soul, the mind and flesh, of the ascetic. If the monk prefers to vaunt his accomplishments, God abandons him to the inescapable consequences of his pride. Then the concord of chastity comes undone. This decomposition only stops when the monk in all humility returns to the proper relationship with God. But we should recall that diabolic deception is implicated in the fall, so the monk does not act in a morally neutral field. Instead, the world is populated by spiritual beings, some of whom are unimaginably malevolent. It is therefore incumbent upon the struggler to seek out the help of his more experienced colleagues. Their assistance and encouragement will greatly contribute to the monk’s renewed spiritual endeavours.

¹⁸⁵ Cassian, *conl* 12.15.3: ‘Euidens tamen est iam proximae puritatis indicium incipere eam de proprii laboris industria non sperare. Si enim uim uersiculi illius unusquisque in ueritate conceperit : nisi dominus aedificauerit domum, in uanum laborauerunt qui aedificant eam , sequitur ut nec de puritatis suae meritis extollatur, intellegens eam se non sua diligentia, sed domini misericordia consecutum, nec contra alios inmiti rigore moueatur, sciens humanam nihil esse uirtutem, si eam uirtus diuina non iuuerit.’

¹⁸⁶ Cassian, *conl* 12.4.3: ‘...ita unusquisque cotidie integritatis suae matutinus explorator effectus de conlata sibi purificatione congaudeat eamque se non suo studio nec uigilantia, sed protectione domini sentiat consecutum, ac tamdiu illius perseuerantiam suo corpori intellegat cohaesuram, quamdiu eam dominus sua fuerit miseratone largitus.’

From this it is clear that Cassian's perspective on dreams is a significant component of his theology. It enables him to assess man's absolute need for divine grace. By drawing grace into his discussion of dreams for the Christian's ascetic 'biofeedback', he has strikingly modified Evagrius' position, to which his own clearly owes so much. In addition to the elements of Evagrius' analysis he used, Cassian added a sophisticated discussion of grace in dreams. There is no reason to think he would have encountered such emphasis on grace in Egypt; it is likely that Cassian incorporated it into his teaching because grace was currently being discussed in his area as he was writing. It is worth noting that his teaching about dreams is continuous with the other teachings from the desert that we have surveyed. Adding a discussion on grace does not appear to have distorted his deeply traditional message. As heir to the long and noble tradition of efforts at appropriating dreams into Christian thought, he stands in succession to Clement. He shares with Clement and Evagrius their great indebtedness to the prolific Alexandrian master, Philo, who made the first efforts at expounding the Bible in terms borrowed from Greek philosophy. Cassian also inherits through Evagrius the practical example of Galen and the Hippocratics, who harnessed the interpretation of dreams to a therapeutic scheme. For his purposes, this tradition must have been at least as important as the Stoic teachings on physics and morals. All of these strands Cassian wove together in a pattern uniquely his own.

¹⁸⁷ Cassian, *conl* 21.26.1-6

PRAYER ACCORDING TO EVAGRIUS PONTICUS

The next major topic to be considered in this thesis is Cassian's teaching on prayer. This will be done by paying careful attention to the goal he sets for praying in the monastic life and also to his descriptions of the experience of prayer. But before turning to Cassian, first we shall turn to Evagrius and examine his teachings. Once we have investigated both theologians' writings, it will be possible for us to assess the distinctive features of Cassian's position. This will be a useful exercise inasmuch as some scholars maintain that Cassian diverges sharply from his spiritual master on this matter, and these scholars posit that Cassian drew the inspiration for his treatment of prayer from other sources, chiefly Messalianism.¹ This contention has not received widespread acceptance, having been neglected rather than refuted.² But it nevertheless indicates an important avenue for further research. No study has yet attempted a thorough examination of Evagrian prayer with an eye to these questions.³ Without this, any comparison to Cassianic prayer must be only tentative. For this reason, the current chapter will take into account not only the justly famous *Chapters on Prayer*, but also references to prayer in Evagrius' other works, not least the *Scholia on the Psalms* and various treatises surviving in Syriac.⁴ The account of Evagrian prayer that emerges will allow us to make a surer claim about Cassian's teaching. It is often held that Evagrius' teaching is abstract and theoretical and Cassian's warm and emotional, but a broad sampling of their writings

¹ Kemmer 1938; Stewart 1998, pp. 37, 114-130

² Pace Stewart 1998, p. 37

³ Bunge 1987; Bunge 1989a; Bunge 1999a; Hausherr 1960; see also Ousley 1979, pp. 261-323; and O'Laughlin 1987.

⁴ No proper critical edition of either *orat* or *in Pss* is available as yet. For *orat*, see nn. 7-8; for *in Pss*, cf. Rondeau 1960. Mlle. Rondeau's article is the 'key' to Evagrius' scholia on the psalms; she continues to work on a critical edition of this text for *Sources chrétiennes*. The reader is referred to her article for further particulars on the scholia cited in this thesis. I wish to thank the Rev. Dr. Luke Dysinger, OSB, for providing me with his compilation of the scholia.

indicates the inadequacy of both generalisations.⁵ As the analyses progress, one potentially momentous divergence will become increasingly clear. It may be summarised in this way: for Evagrius the character of prayer is primarily Trinitarian, whereas for Cassian it is strongly Christocentric. The examination of each theologian in turn will clarify precisely what this means. Upon concluding these examinations, we will be in a better position to appreciate Cassian's reception of Evagrian ideals in his teaching on prayer.

- The fundamentals of Evagrian prayer

We begin with the writings of Evagrius. If we restrict our attention to the theologically significant occurrences of the word *pray* and its cognates, by-passing for instance simple notices in his writings that David and others prayed, certain themes emerge. These themes are quite stable across the corpus of Evagrian theology, suggesting that Evagrius' thoughts on this matter had substantially reached their mature form before he set them down in writing. The primary source for his teaching on prayer

⁵ Hausherr completely rejects the possibility of finding ecstasy in Evagrian mysticism: (Hausherr 1960: p. 153), 'S'il y a ravissement [Prac. I, 38] et même extase [Lettre 8 Bas no 7], ce n'est pas une sortie de soi, un arrachement de l'intelligence aux limites de sa nature; mais le rejet de tout le non intellectuel: une mystique d'intellectualisation. Evagre tend à redevenir un intellect pur, pour voir Dieu par l'activité propre du νοῦς. De la formule dionysienne *ἐαυτοῦ καὶ πάντων ἑκστασις* [*Myst. Theol.* I, 1], Evagre aurait admis *πάντων* mais non pas *ἐαυτοῦ*; encore ne dirait-il *ἑκστασις* pas mais *ἐκδημία*.' In Evagrius' defence, it is reasonable to point out that it is not at all clear what it would mean to go out from oneself, and if he interprets 'going out of one's mind' as a kind of insanity (*cap* XXXIII 9), it must be admitted that this is what the expression means for us as well. Hausherr also operates with a false assumption about Evagrian intellectualism that supplies much of the force of this criticism. What I propose by contrast is that Evagrius endorsed the intellect's reaching out to God in a purified, but emotionally rich movement. As we shall see, this is not so different to what Cassian more explicitly endorses.

is unsurprisingly his treatise, *De oratione*.⁶ This treatise has not appeared in a proper critical edition. Two versions are available, SS. Nikodimos and Makarios' version printed in their *Philokalia* and Suarèz's version reprinted by J.-P. Migne;⁷ but Simon Tugwell, OP, has prepared an edition that takes into account these two versions as well as eight other MSS. Throughout this chapter, all references will be to Tugwell's edition.⁸ The material set forth in this treatise will provide the framework for the other evidence, since it comprehends most of Evagrius' teaching on the subject. The other evidence just mentioned stems from the following sources: *Kephalaia Gnostica*, *Skemmata*, *De cogitationibus*, *Antirrheticus*, *Epistulae*, *De uitiis quae sunt opposita uirtutibus*, *Ad uirginem*, the various scholia and assorted texts edited by Joseph Muyltermans, e.g., *Admonitio paraenetica*, and *Colloquium magistri cum discipulo eius*. For evidence about Evagrius' own habits of prayer, we will also consider details provided by Palladius.

The most obvious way to begin is by noting what Evagrius says that prayer is. He has a great deal to say about this, and some of it is so rich and complex that we will need to return to it later. Because many of these images will recur in other contexts, some of them will be considered at first only in passing, but in due course we will return to them. A persistent feature of Evagrius' account of prayer is its intimate connection with the intellect, something established unmistakably in his scholion on Ps. 34.13 ('And my prayer shall return to my bosom'). Explaining this, Evagrius writes, 'He now calls the

⁶ In the Greek tradition, this work is ascribed to St. Neilos the Ascetic. However, Hausherr has established that Evagrius was the author on the basis of the Syriac and Arabic traditions, in which the work is uniformly ascribed to him, and which antedate the Greek MSS: Hausherr 1939a.

⁷ (Nicodemus 1782: pp. 155-165); PG 79.1165-1200.

⁸ (Tugwell 1981). My thanks to Fr Tugwell for permission to use this useful edition. He notes that the primary drawback of this edition is that it does not take into account the Syriac and Arabic traditions. A thorough critical edition would also account for the Georgian and Armenian traditions (see *CPG*, it. 2452) and St Paisy Velichkovsky's Slavonic translation as well: (Zamfiresco 1990), pp. 1116-1133.

intellect is enfeebled and incapable of resisting demonic temptations.¹⁸ If we bear this in mind, we can better appreciate why Evagrius, returning to the metaphor of ascent, instructs his audience, ‘When you pray, lead your thought [*logismon*] up to God, and if, distracted, it descends, lead it up once more.’¹⁹ Just as we do not eat once only, but often, so too we must pray not just once, but often.

These exhortations mislead us though if because of them we think of prayer simply as a discrete event. Elsewhere, Evagrius emphasises that prayer has the character of a persistent state.²⁰ Since prayer is a state that must be maintained, it makes sense for Evagrius to speak of the need for fear, trembling, labour, sobriety and vigilance in prayer.²¹ But it is only by the grace of God that one can maintain this state.²² Evagrius not only identifies prayer and psalmody as *charismata* conferred by God,²³ he further

¹⁸ Evagrius likens prayer to the intellect’s bulwarks; e.g., *cap par* 53 (PG 79.1253): ‘Fasting regard as a weapon, prayer as a wall, and tears as a laver.’ Cf. *ibid.* 78 (1256); *ant* 2.12, 2.41, 2.55, 2.57, 4.40, 4.53 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 486, 490, 492, 508).

¹⁹ Evagrius, *cap par* 69 (PG 79.1253): *Ἡνίκα προσεύχῃ, τὸν λογισμόν πρὸς Θεὸν ἀνάγαγε, καὶ περισπασθεὶς κατέλθῃ, πάλιν αὐτὸν ἀνάγαγε.*

²⁰ Evagrius, *skem* 29-30 (= *Cod. Barb.* gr. 515, 17/*cap cogn.* 26 (Muyldermans 1931: pp. 53, 61): ‘Oratio est status mentis, omnis terrenae notitiae corruptius. Oratio est status mentis, factus a lumino solo sanctae Trinitatis’); *orat* 53 (Tugwell 1981: p. 11); cf. *ibid.* 41 (p. 9): prayer is a ‘presence unto God’ – a very static description

²¹ Evagrius, *rer mon rat* 11, *bis* (PG 40.1264)

²² See Evagrius, *orat* 29-30, 59, 63, 70, 129 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 7, 12, 14, 23); *KG* 1.37 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 35); *KG* 2.6 (Hausherr 1939b: p. 230); *skem* 2 (= *Cod. Barb.* gr. 515, 1/*cap cogn.* 2 (Muyldermans 1931: pp. 51, 58): ‘...hoc facere absque passionum vacuitate inter impossibilia est, Dei quippe opus cooperantis ei qui contra ipsum spirat, cognatum lumen’. On a comparable note, we read at *skem* 16 (= *Cod. Barb.* gr. 515, 24/*cap cogn.* 15 (Muyldermans 1931: pp. 54, 59)): *Ἀνθρωπὸς ἐστὶ πρακτικὸς, ὁ τοῖς παρὰ Θεοῦ δοθεῖσι κεχρημένος ὀρθῶς.* Moreover, God can act directly upon the intelligence; see *orat* 64 (Tugwell 1981: p. 13). But grace is also often evident through angelic mediation: *orat* 74-77, 80-81, 96 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 14-16, 18); *prak* 24, 76 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.556-557, 664-665); cf. *KG* 3.46, 6.86, 6.88, 6.90 (and on angelology in general, 5.4, 5.7) (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 117, 253, 255 (177, 179)). There is of course still the danger that demons might appear in the guise of angels: see *orat* 95 (Tugwell 1981: p. 18); cf. 2 Cor 11.14. The struggling intellect is caught between the gracious angels and the malicious demons: *KG* 2.48 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 81), the *nous* between demons and angels; cf. *ant* pref., 4.9, 4.27, 8.17, 8.56 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 472, 504, 506, 538-540, 544); *ep* 58.1-2 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 606) and (Bunge 1986a: pp. 276-277). (For all Evagrius’ letters except *ep fid* (= ps.-Basil, *ep*.8), I follow Fr Bunge’s internal divisions.)

²³ Evagrius, *orat* 87 (Tugwell 1981: p. 17)

castigates those who think that they are self-sufficient at the time of prayer.²⁴ But this need for grace, far from absolving the Christian from the need for action, makes it appropriate that the first fruits of our thoughts be sacrificed to God.²⁵ The innumerable blessings of God are also suitable subject matter for meditation.²⁶ Because prayer thus involves the recollection and acknowledgement of God's providential care as expressed in His countless blessings, it comes as no surprise that Evagrius also calls prayer the 'remedy for grief and faintheartedness'.²⁷ 'If God is for us, who can be against us?' (Rom 8.31)

In addition to providing the basis for what we might therefore call a properly Christian outlook on life, prayer is also the basis for theology. The experiential foundation of Evagrian theology is clearest in what is no doubt his most memorable line: 'If you are a theologian, you will pray truly; and if you pray truly, you will be a theologian.'²⁸ This chapter has been taken as the lynchpin of Evagrian contemplative mysticism by a noted scholar of Evagrius, who went on to state his crashing and enormously influential verdict on this mysticism: 'In spite of the theology that is its ultimate goal, Evagrian mysticism remains more philosophical than theological, at least

²⁴ Evagrius, *ant* 8.49, 8.55 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 542-544)

²⁵ Evagrius, *orat* 126 (Tugwell 1981: p. 23); cf. *in Ps* 65.15s'

²⁶ Evagrius gives a long exhortation to meditating at *rer mon rat* 9 (PG 40.1261); the master recommends 'meditation on righteousness' (ἐν τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ) to his troubled disciple in *magis c disc*, (Muyldermans 1952: p. 123). Bunge (1987: p. 26) describes the 'meditative' quality of the monastic hours with their intercalated psalms.

²⁷ Evagrius, *orat* 16 (Tugwell 1981: p. 5): Προσευχὴ ἐστὶ λύπης καὶ ἀθυμίας ἀλέξημα. Cf. *Ad mon* 56 (Greßman 1913: p. 157). Evagrius notes that sorrow or grief leading to dejection (*akedia*) can forestall the repentance needed to correct sins; this in turn forestalls prayer. See *ant* 2.12, 2.41 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 486-490).

²⁸ Evagrius, *orat* 61 (Tugwell 1981: p. 12): Εἰ θεολόγος εἶ, προσεύξῃ ἀληθῶς· καὶ εἰ ἀληθῶς προσεύχῃ, θεολόγος ἔσῃ. Cf. *KG* 4.90 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 175); *epp* 56.1-3, 61 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 602-604, 610) and (Bunge 1986a: pp. 271-272, 281-282).

in the Trinitarian sense.’²⁹ Recently this claim has been comprehensively and persuasively challenged to the extent that its proponents must now defend it, rather than assume it.³⁰ This shift in the debate has created an atmosphere in which it is possible to appreciate how extensively Evagrius qualifies the role of rational activity and speculative thinking in his account of the spiritual life.³¹ Even if his technical vocabulary and foreign cosmology call forth a tremendous effort from his modern interpreters, we should not confuse this for intellectually obtuse speculation on Evagrius’ part. Far more important for Evagrian spirituality, as this celebrated chapter indicates, is the encounter with the Christian God.³²

Evagrius also dramatically curtails the imaginative function of the intellect. We have noted that he considered prayer ‘an ascent to God’. He specifies later that this is an ‘immaterial’ going of the one who prays ‘to the Immaterial’.³³ It is no coincidence that this chapter and other related chapters contain some of Evagrius’ most radically aniconic claims. Because God is radically Other than the created order, it is strictly impossible to form images corresponding accurately to God, since ‘the Divine is without quantity and without form.’³⁴ If then we imagine something when we pray, we run the risk of idolatry.

²⁹ Hausherr 1960: pp. 85-86, 93-99, at p. 99: ‘Malgré la théologie qui en est le but suprême, la mystique évagrienne rest plus philosophique que théologique, au moins au sens trinitaire.’ Cf. Balthasar 1939b, esp. pp. 39-40.

³⁰ See Bunge 1986c; Bunge 1989a

³¹ Cf. Evagrius, *orat* 56 (Tugwell 1981: p. 11); *KG* 1.38, 2.11 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 35, 65); *paeraenesis* 27 (Muyldermans 1952: p. 130); *ep* 41.3 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 594) and (Bunge 1986a: p. 255): even simple thoughts preclude ‘pure prayer’; and see now (Stewart 2001).

³² Cf. Evagrius, *seraphim* (Muyldermans 1946: pp. 370-371); *ep* 61.2-3 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 610) and (Bunge 1986a: p. 282)

³³ Evagrius, *orat* 67 (Tugwell 1981: p. 13): *Μὴ σχηματίσης τὸ Θεῖον ἐν σεαυτῷ προσευχόμενος μηδὲ πρὸς μορφὴν τινὰ συγχωρήσης τυπωθῆναι σου τὸν νοῦν, ἀλλ’ αὐλῶς τῷ αὐλῷ πρόσιθι καὶ συνήσεις.* Cf. *ibid.* 114-120, 142 (pp. 21-22, 26); and esp. in *Ps.* 140.2a’.

³⁴ Evagrius, *orat* 68 (Tugwell 1981: p. 13): *ἄποσον δὲ τὸ θεῖον καὶ ἀσχημάτιστον;* cf. *gnos* 27, 41 (Guillaumont 1989: pp. 132, 166). Evagrius significantly begins *KG* with assertions that the First Good (مصدق) admits of no opposition (مفهوم) and consequently of no qualities (مقدور): *KG* 1.1, 1.2, cf. 2.47, 5.62 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 17, 79, 203-205). On this note, *skem* 21 (= *cap cogn* 20,

This is chiefly dangerous because it establishes a self-enclosed spirituality that separates us from God.³⁵ Hence Evagrius insists that one must guard intellect against concepts.³⁶ In commenting on Romans 8.26 ('For we know not how to pray as we ought'), he writes, 'Perhaps now he did not wish to indicate this, but he prohibited theologising without circumspection. For it is not possible for someone who dwells among the sensible things and receives concepts from them to discourse about God without failing, since God dwells among intelligible things and flees all sensation.'³⁷ To attempt to apply to God concepts that derive from the created order is a perversion closely related to the attempt to understand God by contemplating the natural order. On this point, Evagrius' teaching is unambiguous. God's wisdom may be known through contemplating the created order, but it is 'madness' to claim to know God's essence in this way.³⁸ The least malevolent, but still crippling, outcome that would befall those who neglect Evagrius' advice is that a 'cloud occlude [their] vision at the time of prayer'.³⁹ But there is of course also the far more ominous possibility that the wily demons might provide visions of their own to deceive the negligent intellect.⁴⁰

(Muyldermans 1931: p. 60)) is also instructive: 'Mens quae in actione uersatur, est in mundi huius notitiis, quae autem in cognitione diuersatur, in contemplatione, cum uero orationi dat operam, est sine forma (quod uocatur locus Dei); ipse igitur uidet eam, quae in corporibus est coessentiam, et eam, quae in contemplationibus, et illam, quae est in Deo; quod uero de Deo est, ex impossibilibus manifeste, cum sit incerta essentialis cognitio, nullamque habeat differentiam ad cognitionem essentialem.' Cf. *ep fid* 2.17-42 (Gribomont 1983: pp. 88-90).

³⁵ Cf. Columba Stewart's perceptive criticism of Michel Foucault for reducing asceticism (specifically, Cassian's) to dandyism, (Stewart 1997: pp. 264-265): by neglecting the extrapersonal and indeed universal orientation of Christian asceticism as understood by Cassian, Foucault seriously misrepresented him.

³⁶ Evagrius, *orat* 70 (Tugwell 1981: p. 14): Στῆθι ἐπὶ τῆς φυλακῆς σου, φυλάττων τὸν νοῦν σου ἀπὸ νοημάτων...

³⁷ Evagrius, *sch* 35 in Eccl 5.1-2 (Géhin 1993: p. 116): Ἡ τάχα νῦν οὐ τοῦτο βούλεται λέγειν, προστάσσει δὲ μὴ ἀπερισκέπτως θεολογεῖν· οὐ γὰρ δυνατόν τὸ ἐν αἰσθητοῖς ὄντα καὶ ἀπὸ τούτων λαμβάνοντα τὰ νοήματα περὶ τοῦ ὄντος ἐν τοῖς νοητοῖς θεοῦ καὶ πᾶσαν διαφεύγοντος αἰσθησιν ἀπταιστως διαλεχθῆναι. Cf. *gnos* 27 (Guillaumont 1989: p. 132).

³⁸ Evagrius, *KG* 5.51 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 199): **لَا تَعْلَمُ**

³⁹ Evagrius, *orat* 128 (Tugwell 1981: p. 23):... νέφος ἀντισκοτοῦν σοι ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς προσευχῆς.

⁴⁰ See Evagrius, *orat* 68, 72, 73, 148 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 13, 14, 27); *cog* 2 (Géhin 1998: pp. 154-157); *prak* 46 (Guillaumont 1971: 2. 602-605); *ant* 4.56, 7.31, 7.33 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 510, 534-536). Evagrius

It is clear, then, that Evagrius' radical mistrust of the imagination leads him to advocate abandoning the imagination. He understands this abandonment in essence as a prudent defence against spiritual idiosyncrasy and the demons who would exploit it. On this basis, Evagrius also calls prayer 'the rejection of concepts.'⁴¹ We are not far from the suggestive remark made by Harry Blamires on the intellectual's relationship to Christ. In a different context, Blamires noted that the intellectual's

declaration represents an authoritative judgement upon our Lord – while the Christian's position is that of accepting our Lord's authoritative judgement upon himself. The blasphemy implicit in this reversal of rôles makes one pause. A declaration in which the human brain sums up our Lord as from a superior position is surely wholly secularist in its rejection of divine authority. To *place* our Lord, to speak words which presuppose that the human being uttering them is in a position to know *a priori* what divinity ought to be like, and to evaluate our Lord's claim to have approximated to this ideal, this is, christianly considered, topsy-turvy.⁴²

Blamires has in mind Christ, while Evagrius writes chiefly about the Holy Trinity. But *mutatis mutandis* the observation seems to me to fit remarkably well. What Blamires wrote calls our attention to the relationship that exists between Evagrius' understanding of prayer as the encounter with the Living God and his refusal to ascribe concepts to the Deity. Any concept ascribed to God would unjustifiably limit God, and in turn create in us unreasonable notions about how God acts. Evagrius has a great practical awareness that God is not subject to our expectations or conceptual schemes. This is a fact that

curiously associates the demonic delusion of seeing God with the 'left eye', on which see also *skem* 27 (= *cap cogn* 24 (Muyldermans 1931: p. 61)) and *cog* 42 (Géhin 1998: pp. 296-297). The psychological considerations that underlie Evagrius' assessment are important in their own right, but we will only refer to them as they illuminate what Evagrius teaches on prayer. Some Evagrian passages that help provide the psychological context for this teaching are *skem* 18 (= *Cod. Barb. gr.* 515, 9/*cap cogn* 17), 23 (= *cap cogn* 23) (Muyldermans 1931: pp. 52, 59, 60-61); *ep* 39 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 590-592) and (Bunge 1986a: 252-254); and *KG* 1.45, 1.46, 3.80, 5.12 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 39, 131, 181).

⁴¹ Evagrius, *orat* 71 (Tugwell 1981: p. 14): *προσευχὴ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἀπόθεσις νοημάτων*. Cf. *ep* 58.3 (Guillaumont 1987: p. 218.5): *στέρησιν τῶν ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν νοημάτων*; *ep* 61.3 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 611) and (Bunge 1986a: p. 282): 'Vollkommener Glaube aber wird erworben durch den Verzicht auf alle Gedanken an körperliche Dinge.'

⁴² Blamires 1963, p. 147 (emphasis in the original). Cf. Hausherr 1960, pp. 97-98, on the expression 'localiser Dieu' at *orat* 68.

shines through clearly in his recognition that the Holy Spirit is perfectly capable of graciously pre-empting our ascetic struggle for prayer and allowing us to enjoy His visitation.⁴³

All of what we have seen goes to establish that, according to Evagrius, prayer is fundamentally the hard-won habit of openness toward God. As Evagrius puts it, ‘Do not wish for your affairs to come to pass as seems best to you, but rather as pleases God, and you will be undisturbed and thankful in your prayer.’⁴⁴ It is precisely this habitual acceptance of God’s will that makes prayer ‘more divine than all the virtues’.⁴⁵ Andrew Louth has noted another aspect of this openness, which is that it allows a privileged frankness before God. ‘To pray, truly, then is to have attained that state of *parrhêsia*, of openness, with God, in which prayer is a true account of our relationship with God: a state of communication, or communion, which is entry to that other world in the immediacy of God’s presence that transfigures the world in which we live our ordinary lives.’⁴⁶ Later, we shall have the occasion to note that supplication on behalf of others is one of the great offices of one who prays. Indeed, it makes the human at prayer ‘equal to the angels.’ But it is worth noting that the notion of praying with assurance is a recurrent theme in Evagrius’ writings.⁴⁷

⁴³ See Evagrius, *orat* 63 (Tugwell 1981: p. 12). Hausherr (1960: p. 88) expresses some consternation in his comments on this chapter: ‘Il semble en effet renverser tout le système.’ Evidently, he has assumed a comprehensive Evagrian ‘system’, which is not an assumption that I would care to make. In any event, God is ultimately exempt for the strictures of Evagrius’ putative system. Cf. *ep magna* 53 (Vitestam 1963-1964: p. 21) and (Bunge 1986a: pp. 322-323), which specifies that God acts unnaturally, naturally and supernaturally. Cassian appears to have learned this lesson from Evagrius: cf. *conl* 1.19.1.

⁴⁴ Evagrius, *orat* 89 (Tugwell 1981: p. 17): *Μὴ θέλε ὥς σοι δοκεῖ ἀλλ’ ὥς Θεῷ ἀρέσκει γίνεσθαι τὰ κατὰ σέ, καὶ ἔσῃ ἀτάραχος καὶ εὐχάριστος ἐν προσευχῇ σου.* See also *ibid.* 31-34, pp. 7-8. That Evagrius learned this from his own experience he states in *orat* 32.

⁴⁵ Evagrius, *orat* 150 (Tugwell 1981: p. 27): *ἀρετῶν πασῶν ἡ προσευχή θειότερα.* On the basis of five MSS, Tugwell prefers *ἀνωτέρα* to *θειότερα*.

⁴⁶ Louth 1997, p. 7; on *parrhêsia* more generally, see now Scarpato 2001.

⁴⁷ Evagrius, *orat* 80 (Tugwell 1981: p. 16): *πληροφορία*; cf. *ep* 4.2 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 568) and (Bunge 1986a: p. 215); *ant* 8.20 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 540)

Inasmuch as prayer allows us to attain to our highest function as ‘conversation partners with God’,⁴⁸ Evagrius has good reason for identifying prayer as our ‘consummate joy’.⁴⁹ It is significant that this is the note on which Evagrius chose to end his treatise. But this is not an anomalous occurrence. Elsewhere, Evagrius notably describes the prayer as ‘the promontory of joy and thanksgiving’.⁵⁰ Prayer according to Evagrius involves other acceptable emotional states as well, notably desire and love.⁵¹ There is no basis for doubting that Evagrius meant exactly what he wrote.⁵² To be sure, joy, love and desire as we know them now will be transfigured in their perfected state. But this nevertheless constitutes significant evidence that Evagrius attributed emotions to the spiritually proficient.

- The monastic framework of Evagrian prayer

As we considered what Evagrius teaches prayer is, we have already noticed that his teaching presupposes certain patterns of behaviour, such as openness and trust, that praying both requires and reinforces. This is to be expected since Evagrius is first and foremost a monk whose writings, even at their most refined, are designed to promote

⁴⁸ Evagrius, *orat* 4 (Tugwell 1981: p. 3): συνόμιλος

⁴⁹ See Evagrius, *orat* 153 (Tugwell 1981: p. 28): προσευχήν ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν ἄλλην χαρὰν

⁵⁰ Evagrius, *orat* 15 (Tugwell 1981: p. 5): Προσευχή ἐστὶ χαρᾶς καὶ εὐχαριστίας πρόβλημα. Cf. *ibid.* 23 (p. 6). Evagrius also calls joy ‘vision of prayers’ at *uit opp uirt* 3 (PG 79.1144): Χαρὰ [...] εὐχῶν ὀπτασία. See too *in Ps* 125.5γ, where the fruits of prayerful tears are reaped with joy.

⁵¹ Evagrius, *orat* 114, 118 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 21, 22): desire; *ibid.* 52, 61 (pp. 11, 12), and *KG* 1.86-87 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 57): love. Cf. Bamberger 1970, p. 75 fn. 54; Hausherr 1960, p. 154.

⁵² Here I must differ from Hausherr (1960: p. 184), who writes, ‘Non pas précisément une joie au-dessus de toute autre, mais une disposition, un «état» qui te fera oublier totalement toute joie inférieure.’ I think this is untenable for two reasons: 1) It is easy to suppose that joy (*chara*) can be a state; the Stoics thought so: Diogenes Laërtius 7.115 (= SVF 3.431 (von Arnim 1903-1924)), Andronicus, *pass* 6 (= SVF 3.432 (*ibid.*)); Cicero, *Tusc disp* 4.12 (= SVF 4.38 (*ibid.*)); 2) Hausherr’s own claim, by referring to ‘toute joie inférieure’ and implicitly making prayer the superlative joy, therefore reinserts it into the continuum of

Christian living. Evagrius regarded prayer as the supreme virtue, which suggests that the other virtues are directed toward securing a life of prayerful devotion.⁵³ In maintaining this close association of prayer and action, Evagrius does no more than follow the Lord's Prayer. Thus, he notes that true prayer is only possible if we extend forgiveness to those indebted to us.⁵⁴ Evagrius' further teachings simply develop this trend, as when he writes, 'Put away every lie and oath, you who want to pray like a monk'.⁵⁵ He similarly stresses the complementarity of action and prayer when he says, 'Prayer is the scion of gentleness and freedom from anger'.⁵⁶ Evagrius' call for freedom from anger is a persistent feature of his spiritual counsel.⁵⁷ He was clearly aware of the enormous temptation to anger that interaction with others provides. Indeed, he saw in social interaction a particularly active theatre of demonic assault.⁵⁸ He further saw the great danger of bearing grudges, as a pair of chapters from a MS in the Bibliothèque Nationale make abundantly clear: 'If you bear a grudge while praying, you scatter seed on the rocks. If you pray for your enemies,

emotions. I am grateful to Bishop Kallistos for the opportunity to discuss this aspect of Evagrian thought with him.

⁵³ In this connection, it is worth noting that Evagrius begins the work by speaking of compounding a perfume (cf. Ex. 30.34), which he likens to the proper balance of the four virtues; *orat* 1 (Tugwell 1981: p. 3).

⁵⁴ Evagrius, *orat* 104 (Tugwell 1981: p. 20); cf. Mt. 18.24-35. The Coptic tradition preserves an Evagrian commentary on the Our Father; see fn. 314. Evagrius returns to the Our Father at *orat* 59 (p. 12).

⁵⁵ Evagrius, *orat* 127 (Tugwell 1981: p. 23): Πάν ψεύδος καὶ πάντα ὄρκον περίστασο ὡς μοναχὸς καὶ προσεύξασθαι ποθῶν.

⁵⁶ Evagrius, *orat* 14 (Tugwell 1981: p. 5): Προσευχὴ ἐστὶ πραότητος καὶ ἀοργησίας βλάστημα. Cf. *ibid.* 145 (p. 26).

⁵⁷ See *orat* 48 (Tugwell 1981: p. 10): demonically inspired anger; *KG* 4.47 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 157): a nicely autobiographical note; *prak* 11 (cautions against anger and memories), 23-25 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.516-519); *ant* 5.17 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 514); *cog* 16.22-33 (Géhin 1998: p. 208). These passages caution also against fantasies. In *uit opp uirt* 3 (PG 79.1144), Evagrius describes anger as an obstacle to prayer: Ὅργη [...] εὐχῆς σκῶλον.

⁵⁸ At *orat* 137, 139-140 (Tugwell 1981: p. 25), Evagrius emphasises the refrain that communal life provides ample opportunities for the demons to set one monk against another and destroy them both; likewise, *prak* 5 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.504). Evagrius cautioned against saddening anyone for similar reasons: *orat* 20 (Tugwell 1981: p. 6).

you shall dismiss grudge bearing.’⁵⁹ It is only by totally abandoning anger that reconciliation is possible, and without reconciliation, prayer is impossible.⁶⁰

Another theme that runs throughout Evagrian theology is linked to prayer when he stresses the necessity of charity and self-renunciation.⁶¹ In a passage redolent of the *Vita Antonii* no less than the Gospels, Evagrius writes, ‘Go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and taking up your cross deny yourself, so that you may be able to pray without distraction.’⁶² The extent of self-sacrifice Evagrius requires is nothing short of heroic: ‘Keep your eyes down in your praying, and, denying your flesh and soul, live according to the intellect.’⁶³ But it must never become the grounds for vaunting one’s accomplishments, since ‘arrogant thoughts that remain in us ... reveal our intellect to be without boldness at the time of prayer’.⁶⁴ For those still tempted to haughtiness, Evagrius has a stringent beatitude: ‘Blessed is the monk who regards himself as the offscouring of all things.’⁶⁵ God will vouchsafe angelic protection to those who have cultivated this sort

⁵⁹ Evagrius, *excerpta* 39-40 (*Parisinus* 2748, f° 163^v = (Muyldermans 1932: p. 90)): 39. *Μνησικάκος προσευχόμενος, σπείρει κατὰ πέτρας*. 40. *Προσευχόμενος ὑπὲρ ἐχθρῶν, ἀπελάσεις μνησικακίαν*. Cf. *prak* 26, 100 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.560, 710).

⁶⁰ Evagrius, *orat* 21 (Tugwell 1981: p. 6). On freedom from anger, cf. *ibid.* 24, 26 (pp. 6, 7); *cog* 32, 37.15-25 (Géhin 1998: pp. 262-267, 280-282); *prak* 25 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.558-559).

⁶¹ See Evagrius, *orat* 18, 37, 128, 142, 152 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 6, 8, 23, 26, 27). On the ‘three renunciations’, see *KG* 1.78-80 (Muyldermans 1932: p. 50.22-27) = (Hausherr 1939b: p. 230); and Hausherr 1960, pp. 31 and esp. 81-82. At *orat* 130-132 (p. 24), Evagrius offers reassurance for anyone who undertakes the difficult business of self-renunciation.

⁶² Evagrius, *orat* 17 (Tugwell 1981: p. 5): *Ἀπελθὼν πώλησόν σου τὰ ὑπάρχοντα καὶ δὸς πτωχοῖς, καὶ λαβὼν τὸν σταυρὸν ἀπάρνησαι σεαυτὸν ἵνα δυνηθῇς ἀπερισπάστως προσεύχεσθαι*. Cf. Mt 19.21; Athanasius, *u Ant* 3.1 (Bartelink 1994: pp. 134-136). Certainly Evagrius would not have needed recourse to the *Life* to have come up with this chapter, but just the same it is worth noting parenthetically that Evagrius very likely knew the *Life of Antony*: Bunge 1983, p. 332.

⁶³ Evagrius, *orat* 110 (Tugwell 1981: p. 21): *Ἀμετεώριστον ὄμμα ἔχε ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ σου, καὶ ἀρνησάμενος σου τὴν σάρκα καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν κατὰ νοῦν ζῇθι*

⁶⁴ Evagrius, *ant* 8.28 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 540)

⁶⁵ Evagrius, *orat* 121 (Tugwell 1981: p. 22): *Μακάριός ἐστι μοναχὸς ὁ πάντων περίφημα ἑαυτὸν λογιζόμενος*.

of 'deep humility'.⁶⁶ Faith in this divine assistance enables the humble to be courageous in the face of demonic assault aimed at distracting the Christian from prayer.⁶⁷ This courage is not to be dismissed lightly. Evagrius' descriptions of the demons' attacks are chilling, for they not only terrify and disorient the intellect when possible, but they also do bodily harm.⁶⁸ Indeed, the author of the Coptic *Life* claims to have seen wounds inflicted by the demons on Evagrius' own body.⁶⁹ But these trials are overcome by the humble Christian who perseveres in prayer and adds to prayer vigils and fasting.⁷⁰ This perseverance is needed in order to safeguard the fruits of prayer,⁷¹ not only from the direct assault of the demons but also from the discouragement that potentially comes from the vicissitudes of successful prayer.⁷²

Evagrius further links the ascetic life to the life of prayer when he teaches that successful prayer depends upon the disengagement from every impassioned thought (that

⁶⁶ Evagrius, *orat* 96 (Tugwell 1981: p. 18): *Ταπεινοφροσύνης πολλῆς*. See also *octo spir mal* 18 (PG 79.1164), a magnificent exhortation to humility by way of contrasting its happy effects to the devastating consequences of arrogance.

⁶⁷ On courage, see Evagrius, *orat* 96-97 (Tugwell 1981: p. 18).

⁶⁸ See Evagrius, *orat* 91-100, 106, 107, 109, 111-112 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 17-19, 20, 21). *Orat* 106-109 and 111-112 are apophthegmatic (*orat* 107: John the Dwarf; 108: Theodore of Tabennisi; 106, 109, 111-2: anon).

⁶⁹ *HL* copt 38.8H, (Amélineau 1887: p. 115): α κιδεμοκ δε ι ψαροφ πογσοπ αυτκζακ ερθοτ καφακσωτεμ ακοκ ετεφσμη αλδα μπεκκαγ ερωγ αυζιογι εροφ κχωρζ κζακ τατρεα ογοζ ακκαζ εκι ερθοτ κκεκβαλ ευχη θεκ πεφσωμα φτ πετοι μμεθρε. (Quodam die dæmones ad illum venerunt illique plagas dederunt; illius vocem audivimus, neminem autem vidimus. Illum per noctem *taureis* cæderunt, nostrisque oculis in ejus corpore plagas conspeximus: Deus nobis testis est). On the Coptic Palladiana, see Bunge 1994.

⁷⁰ Evagrius, *hum* (Muyldermans 1952: p. 112): *فهمنا في هذا اليوم، وبه في هذه الساعة، في هذا اليوم، وبه في هذه الساعة، في هذا اليوم، وبه في هذه الساعة* ('And indeed on this account Our Lord, who knew the infirmity of our flesh, ordered those who sleep to watch and pray that they not enter into temptation'); *prou et expos* 36 (Muyldermans 1952: p. 138): *فهمنا في هذا اليوم، وبه في هذه الساعة، في هذا اليوم، وبه في هذه الساعة* ('The humble sees the star of prayer, but the fasting man drives evil visions from his heart.')

⁷¹ Evagrius, *orat* 49 (Tugwell 1981: p. 10)

⁷² Evagrius, *orat* 29 (Tugwell 1981: p. 7); cf. *ep* 42.3 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 594) and (Bunge 1986a: p. 257).

is, his famous doctrine of *apatheia*).⁷³ ‘One in chains cannot run, nor can the intellect enslaved to passions see the place of spiritual prayer, for it is dragged and carried to and fro by the impassioned concept, and has no steady footing.’⁷⁴ But the elimination of impassioned thoughts is insufficient. Even simple thoughts can preoccupy the intellect and therefore distract it from prayer. These, too, must therefore be rejected.⁷⁵ Thoughts, whether impassioned or simple, along with every passion and worldly care are in the end incompatible with the pursuit of virtue (which is *praxis*) and of truth (which is *gnosis*).⁷⁶ Evagrius’ scholia on Proverbs 19.13 (‘prayers from the concubine’s fees are not chaste’) can be taken profitably in this connection: ‘He designates the impure soul a ‘concubine’ and its state he calls ‘hire’, from which come prayers that are not pure.’⁷⁷ Purity during prayer is a prime concern of Evagrius’.⁷⁸ From all we have just seen, the importance of ascetic struggle for the one who would pray is abundantly clear. But no less important is knowledge. ‘Knowledge is most excellent, for it is prayer’s collaborator, rousing the intellectual faculty to contemplation of Divine knowledge.’⁷⁹

Our survey of what Evagrius describes as the practical foundation justifies the claim that he understood prayer to be the goal toward which ascetic struggle is orientated. Hausherr rightly insisted that for Evagrius prayer and contemplation were ultimately

⁷³ Evagrius, *orat* 53-54 (Tugwell 1981: p. 11). For a lucid and detailed study of *apatheia* and prayer, see Messana 1995.

⁷⁴ Evagrius, *orat* 72 (Tugwell 1981: p. 14): *Οὐ δύναται δεδμένος δραμεῖν, οὐδὲ νοῦς πάθεισι δουλεύων προσευχῆς πνευματικῆς τόπον ἰδεῖν· ἔλκεται γὰρ καὶ περιφέρεται ἐκ τοῦ ἐμπαθοῦς νοήματος καὶ οὐκ ἔξει στάσιν ἄκλονον.*

⁷⁵ Evagrius, *orat* 56-58 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 11-12)

⁷⁶ Evagrius, *orat* 141 (Tugwell 1981: p. 25); for this interpretation of *ἀρετή* and *ἀληθεία*, see Hausherr 1960, pp. 172-173

⁷⁷ Evagrius, *sch* 196 in Prov 19.13 (Géhin 1987: p. 292). Bamberger links purity to the rejection of concepts, et c., in a very interesting and convincing way: (Bamberger 1970), pp. 48-49.

⁷⁸ Evagrius, *skem* 6 (= *Cod. Barb.* gr. 515, 4/*cap cog* 6, (Muyldermans 1931), pp. 51, 58): *Θυμιατήριόν ἐστι νοῦς καθαρὸς κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν τῆς προσευχῆς, μὴ ἐφαπτόμενος πράγματος αἰσθητοῦ.* Purity is here linked to the ‘dispossession of perceptible things’; cf. *cap par* 75 (PG 79.1256), in *Pss* 108.78, 140.1a.

⁷⁹ Evagrius, *orat* 86, (Tugwell 1981), p. 16: *Ἡ γνῶσις καλλίστη ὑπάρχει. συνεργὸς γὰρ ἐστὶ τῆς*

indistinct.⁸⁰ This claim is consistent with the results of our earlier overview of what prayer is – if prayer is basically a habit of openness toward God, then it is no different from contemplation of God. But just as knowledge and contemplation according to Evagrius are fruits of a life of ascetic struggle and virtuous behaviour, so too is prayer bound up in proper actions. This is as much as to say that without being constantly disposed to prayer, genuine prayer is impossible. In other words, as we have already noted in passing, prayer for Evagrius is no discrete event, it is rather a lifelong process. Since we have come to this point of our analysis of Evagrius' doctrine on prayer, it will be convenient to turn to what he taught about when we should pray.

- The proper times for prayer

On this subject, we find that once more Evagrius bases his teaching on a straightforward scriptural precedent: 'Pray without ceasing.'⁸¹ The scope of this effort is revealed in the following advice: 'Seal every act with prayer, but chiefly what you see your thought embracing.'⁸² The practical implication of this passage on the spiritual life is that prayer should be made throughout one's life, which should therefore be lived in a

προσευχῆς, τὴν νοερὰν δύναμιν τοῦ νοῦ διυπνίζουσα πρὸς θεωρίαν τῆς θείας γνώσεως.

⁸⁰ Hausherr 1960, p. 121: 'A chaque échelon de l'ascension il y a prière et il y a gnose, et toujours de valeur égale. Vous pourriez donc indifféremment caractériser le degré spirituel d'un homme soit par l'état de sa prière, soit par l'état de sa contemplation. Ce n'est cependant qu'au sommet que l'identification se parachève, un peu comme celle de l'amour et de la connaissance selon certaines théories scolastiques.'

⁸¹ 1 Thess. 5.17; see Evagrius, *prak* 49 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.610-613); *Ad uirg* 5 (Greßman 1913: p. 146), where he glosses the quotation, 'and remember Christ your Creator'; *Ad mon* 37 (Greßman 1913: p. 156); *sig quiet* (Muyldermans 1952: pp. 121-122, 155): **وَمَا يَزَالُ يَتَذَكَّرُ بِمَنْعَتِهِ وَتَحْفَظُهُ بِمَنْعَتِهِ** ('... and you must pray constantly, because it is needful to give thanks to God, who snatched you from the world at the service of the angels.');

and *ep* 19.2 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 578) and (Bunge 1986a: p. 232).

⁸² Evagrius, *cap par* 81 (PG 79.1256): *Πᾶσαν μὲν πράξιν διὰ προσευχῆς σφράγιζε· ταύτην δὲ μάλιστα, ἐφ' ἣν τὸν λογισμὸν θεωρεῖς ἀμφιβάλλοντα.*

manner consonant with prayerfulness.⁸³ One realm into which this need for prayer spills over is the practice of vigils.⁸⁴ Palladius relates that Evagrius himself followed a strict regimen of nightly vigils.⁸⁵ In his comments on Proverbs 31.15 ('And she hath risen in the night, and given a prey to her household...'), Evagrius makes the following remarks: 'The sun of justice finds the soul that has risen in the night, chiefly praying not to be led into temptation. So she too is eager to quote that verse, 'I have watched and am become as a sparrow all alone on the housetop.'"⁸⁶ This emphasis on wakefulness does not mean, however, that the life of prayer is lived in the constant tension between attentiveness and fatigue. 'Know, then, that even in times of spiritual relaxation and feasting, the Lord must be worshipped with even more godly fear and reverence.'⁸⁷ Evagrius' reference to 'spiritual loosening', *pneumatiki anesis*, recalls the anecdote related about a hunter who met Antony the Great and his disciples in a moment of levity. Antony told the scandalised man, 'If we stretch the brethren beyond measure they will soon break. So it

⁸³ Cf. Evagrius, *orat* 55, 66, 78, 142 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 11, 13, 15, 26)

⁸⁴ See Evagrius, *Ad mon* 46-51 (Greßman 1913: p. 157); *ant* 2.55 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 492).

⁸⁵ *HL copt* 38.6D (Amélineau 1887: p. 113, corrected with reference to (de Vogüé 1989), p. 331): πιζκιμ δε καϑηνυ καϑ πε δεκ οϋϋι εϑεκνοτ δε μπιρε γ κτε πιεχωρζ δεκ πιεζοοϋ δε κεμπαϑκοτ επτηρϑ πε κε οϋοκ οϋοκζ κταϑ πε εϑιρι κτακαμερι τηρς εϑςκνικι κθνητϑ εϑβορβερ μπιζκιμ εβολ ζαροϑ εϑερο μπεϑκατ εμοϋϋτ δεκ κιχικ καϋ ετςμοκτ δεκ πιεχωρζ δε αϑϡακ κνικ εϑεκκοτ μπιρε γ ϡατβε (μν) πωϡν. Εβολ εϑμοϡι δεκ πιοκζ εϑερ μελετη οϋοζ εϑϡλνλ εϑωρ μπιζκιμ εβολ ζαροϑ εϑερο μπεϑκατ εμοϋϋτ κκιχιμ καϋ κτε κιτραϑν αϑϡωπι ερε πεϑκατ τοϋβνοϋτ εμαϡω οϋοζ αϑερ πεμϡα ποϋζμοτ κτε οϋςοϑια κεμ οϋεμι κεμ οϋδιακρηςις εϑϡωρϡ εβολ κκιζβνοϋι κτε πδεμοκ. ('Somnium vero ex mensura partitus erat: tertiam noctis partem dormiebat, nunquam vero per diem dormivit. Habebat septum in quo per omnem mediam diei partem ambulabat sopore oppressus, suam mentem ut visiones constitutas adspectaret cogens; nocte vero, quum jam tertiam noctis partem dormiisset, totam reliquam noctis partem per septum ambulando consumeat, meditans atque orans, somnium a se expellens, suam mentem ut visiones scripturarum constitutas adspiceret cogens. Sic mentis purissimæ factus est ac sapientiæ, scientiæ discretionisque gratia dignus habitus est, opera dæmonum discerens.') Evagrius' remarks at *in Pss* 6.7γ', 118.62κζ probably reflect this experience.

⁸⁶ Evagrius, *sch* 374 in Prov. 31.15 (Géhin 1987: pp. 464-465): Τὴν ἐκ νυκτὸς ἀνισταμένην ψυχὴν ἐγρηγορυῖαν εὐρίσκει ὁ τῆς δικαιοσύνης ἥλιος, πάντως δὲ καὶ προσευχομένην, ἵνα μὴ ἐμπέσῃ εἰς πειρασμόν· σπεύδει γὰρ καὶ αὐτὴ εἰπεῖν τὸ «ἡγρύπνησα καὶ ἐγενόμην ὡς στρουθίον μονάζον ἐπὶ δώματι».

⁸⁷ Evagrius, *orat* 143 (Tugwell 1981: p. 26): Ἴσθι γὰρ ὅτι κὰν ταῖς πνευματικαῖς ἀνέσεσι καὶ εὐωχιαῖς μᾶλλον μετ' εὐλαβείας καὶ αἰδοῦς δεῖ λατρεύειν αὐτῷ.

is necessary to make concessions to the brethren's level from time to time.⁸⁸ Given Evagrius' awareness of other early apophthegmata, it is certainly possible that he intended to recall to his readers' mind this tale.⁸⁹

Thus far, we have seen that Evagrius understands prayer to be fundamentally a hard-won habit of perpetual conversation with God. Evagrius actually goes much further in describing the phenomenon of prayer. So we will now turn to his accounts of how to pray, beginning with some simple procedural advice and culminating with a few broad characterisations of the ethos of prayer. As for procedure, Evagrius considers it a matter of indifference whether prayer is made corporately or privately; it is simply more important that prayer be made.⁹⁰ Following scriptural precedents, he insists that quality is more important than quantity when it comes to prayer.⁹¹ He further insists on the importance of sincerity in prayer that comes from a correspondence between inward disposition and outward performance.⁹² There are grounds for thinking that Evagrius considered some postures and gestures more conducive to prayer than others. One chapter, for instance, refers to standing during prayer.⁹³ In another, he recommends

⁸⁸ *apoph* Antony 13 (PG 65.77-80)

⁸⁹ Evagrius relates some of this material as at second-hand, e.g., *orat* 106-109 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 20-21); *prak* 91-93, 96-99 (Guillaumont 1971: 2. 692-696, 702-710); *gnos* 44-48 (Guillaumont 1989: pp. 172-189). But in other passages, he seems to be generating the Apophthegmata, so to speak, on the basis of his own discussions with certain desert fathers, chiefly Macarius and John the Seer of Thebaid. Thus, *prak* 94 (2.698); *HL* copt 38B (Amélineau 1887: p. 112); and *ant* 2.36, 4.23, 4.45-46, 4.58, 5.4, 6.16, 7.19, 8.26 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 490, 506-512, 524, 532, 540). The tale Evagrius relates at *prak* 95 (2.700) is actually something he himself said, as we know from Palladius, *HL* 38.13 (Bartelink 1974: p. 202). Perhaps Evagrius would not be surprised that he made a respectable showing in the later collections of Apophthegmata. It is a pity that this testimony about Evagrius from the Coptic life, *HL* copt 38.10L, (Amélineau 1887: p. 118), did not find its way into one of the collections: 'It was impossible to find a worldly word in the mouth of Abba Evagrius, or disputatious conversation; nor would he willingly hear such from another.' ΟΥΜΕΤΑΤΧΟΜ ΤΕ ΖΗΚΑ ΚΤΕΚΧΕΜ ΟΥΣΑΧΙ ΚΤΕ ΠΙΚΟCΜΟC ΘΕΚ ΡΩC ΚΑΠΑ ΕΥΑΓΓΙ ΙΕ ΟΥCΑΧΙ ΚΨΕΡΨΙ ΟΥΔΕ ΜΠΑΘΟΥΨΨ ΕCΘΜΕC ΚΤΟΤC ΚΚΕ ΟΥΔΙ.

⁹⁰ Evagrius, *orat* 42 (Tugwell 1981: p. 9): with others or alone

⁹¹ Evagrius, *orat* 151 (Tugwell 1981: p. 27): with quality rather than quantity (cf. Lk 18.10, Mt 6.7)

⁹² Evagrius, *orat* 28, 41 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 7-9): internally as well as externally

⁹³ Evagrius, *orat* 9 (Tugwell 1981: p. 4)

praying with downcast eyes.⁹⁴ It is perhaps on a related note that he holds up the Publican as an exemplary type of the person at prayer. Even though he explicitly contrasts his prayer with that of the Pharisee and expands on the destructive consequences of pharisaic self-righteousness in the following chapter, we cannot reject the possibility that Evagrius was also endorsing the Publican's physical gestures made at prayer.⁹⁵

Another lesson we would do well to learn from the Publican is the importance of praying tearfully. This is a theme that Evagrius does not tire of reiterating.⁹⁶ Evagrius regards tears as an index for one's fear of God.⁹⁷ The vicissitudes of spiritual progress periodically necessitate other emotional responses in prayer, as when Evagrius recommends to the person being tempted brief and vehement prayers.⁹⁸ We see once more that Evagrius is keenly aware of the spiritual value of emotions, which he assigns a tremendously important role in prayerful progress. And here again, the scope of his endorsement is broad, as is indicated in the following chapter: 'The sensation of prayer is a gathered intellect, together with reverence and compunction and distress of soul in confession of failings, with silent groaning.'⁹⁹ The ethos of prayer, here subsequent to a gathered intellect (*synnoia*), is emotionally rich. It is not the case, however, that Evagrius simply ascribes emotions to what we might call the penitential aspect of prayer. As we

⁹⁴ Evagrius, *orat* 110 (Tugwell 1981: p. 21)

⁹⁵ Evagrius, *orat* 102-103 (Tugwell 1981: p. 19): like the publican; never against anyone (i.e., as did the Pharisee)

⁹⁶ Evagrius, *orat* 5-8, 78-79, 144 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 4, 15, 26): tearfully; cf. *prak* 57, 90 (Guillaumont 1971: 2. 634-635, 690-691); *Ad uirg* 25 (Greßman 1913: p. 148); *in Pss* 6.7γ', 38.13η', 125.5γ'; *ant* 6.10, (Frankenberg 1912: p. 522)

⁹⁷ Cf. Evagrius, *al sent* 14 (PG 40.1269): *Εἰ φοβῆται τὸν Θεὸν, ἐκ τῶν δακρύων γνώθι.*

⁹⁸ Evagrius, *orat* 98 (Tugwell 1981: p. 19): when tempted, briefly and vehemently. Cf. *prak* 42 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.596-597); *Ad mon* 37 (Greßman 1913: p. 156); *ant.* pref. (Frankenberg 1912: p. 472). Evagrius also asserted that anger is properly directed at the demons: *cog* 10 (Géhin 1998: pp. 184-187); *prak* 24, 42, 86, 93 (2.556, 596, 676, 696).

⁹⁹ Evagrius, *orat* 43 (Tugwell 1981: p. 9): *Αἰσθησίς ἐστι προσευχῆς σύννοια μετ' εὐλαβείας καὶ κατανύξεως καὶ ὀδύνης ψυχῆς ἐν ἐξαγορεύσει πταισμάτων, μετὰ στεναγμῶν ἀφώνων.* Cf. *apoph* Evagrius 7 (PG 65.176): Evagrius is struck with salutary compunction.

have previously seen, he characterises the higher reaches of prayer, the unitive aspect of prayer, in equally emotionally potent terms of joy, love and desire.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, Evagrius ascribes to one holy hesychast ‘fiery prayer’.¹⁰¹

From this variety of advice, we can see that Evagrius appreciated the need for a measure of latitude in one’s prayer life in order to respond to a wide array of situations. However useful the impetus of emotion properly harnessed may be, Evagrius was also well aware of the need for the anchorage that fixity of purpose provides.¹⁰² This single-minded devotion to God in prayer is elsewhere strikingly reinforced by Evagrius. ‘Struggle to establish your intellect deaf and dumb at the time of prayer, and you will be able to pray.’¹⁰³ Evagrius similarly dedicates a great run of chapters to the need for praying without distraction.¹⁰⁴ In this section, he uses picturesque imagery to drive home the point: in prayer one must be distracted neither by fleas, nor by angels.¹⁰⁵ The importance of this is critical, however, and Evagrius puts it with typical alacrity: to be distracted by anything whatsoever in prayer is in effect to offer prayer to that thing rather than to God; in a word, it is idolatrous.¹⁰⁶ This is the context in which we should understand the passages from his letters that relate how Evagrius himself would pray for release from ‘various images’.¹⁰⁷ Elsewhere, Evagrius urges that prayer should be made

¹⁰⁰ See fn 49-51. Evagrius’ remark in the cover letter about the two types of prayer, practical and theoretical (to use the English cognates) is evidence of the modality described here in terms of penitence and union. It is noteworthy that, at *Ad mon* 87 (Greßman 1913: p. 160), Evagrius takes the emotional states of monks very serious, encouraging sympathy, commiseration and gladdening the downcast.

¹⁰¹ Evagrius, *orat* 111 (Tugwell 1981: p. 21): τῆς ἐμπύρου προσευχῆς; cf. in *Ps* 104.19α’

¹⁰² See Evagrius, *orat* 9, 34, 93 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 5, 8, 18)

¹⁰³ Evagrius, *orat* 11 (Tugwell 1981: p. 5)

¹⁰⁴ See Evagrius, *orat* 17, 43, 104, 106-112 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 5, 9, 20-21); cf. *prak* 63, 69 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.646, 654)

¹⁰⁵ Evagrius, *orat* 105 (Tugwell 1981: p. 20): fleas; and 112 (p. 21): angels

¹⁰⁶ Evagrius, *cog* 37 (Géhin 1998: pp. 280-284)

¹⁰⁷ Evagrius, *epp* 7.1, 13, 41.1-3 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 570-572, 574, 592-594) and (Bunge 1986a: pp. 220, 225-226, 255); cf. *paraeneticus* (Frankenberg 1912: p. 560) – significantly, also reminiscent of *orat* 43

attentively,¹⁰⁸ which is the same principle stated as an injunction rather than a prohibition. Clearly, his remarks on various postures and emotions are subservient to the overarching need for a stable orientation toward God. This of course quite satisfactorily buttresses his doctrine of prayer as the acquired disposition toward perpetual conversation with God.

- Interacting with God via prayer

Up to this point, we have given no thought to precisely what the conversational element in prayer might be. But insofar as a conversation is by definition bilateral, we should pause to consider the significance of his choice of terms. Did Evagrius in fact mean for us to expect interaction in prayer, or is his use of the term ‘conversation’ simply a figure of speech? In light of the fact that Evagrius was no stranger to the monastic ideal – already taking form in his time – of *hesychia*, should we abandon conversation as the governing paradigm in favour of silent contemplation? We will return to this last question shortly, but it is possible on the basis of a great deal of Evagrius’ writings to answer the first question very straightforwardly. Evidence from his works supports a robust understanding of prayer as conversation with God.

Along these lines, Evagrius considers supplicatory prayer appropriate. Here he has the illustrious precedent of St Paul at 1 Tim. 2.1, which had been reiterated less

(Tugwell 1981: p. 9); see Hausherr 1960, pp. 66-67. So perhaps release from images need not suggest release from emotions.

¹⁰⁸ Evagrius, *orat* 149 (Tugwell 1981: p. 27)

remotely by Origen in his *De oratione*.¹⁰⁹ The evidence from Evagrius is indirect, but conclusive, and comes in the form of scattered references to things for which prayer should be made. Thus, in his letters Evagrius endorses prayer for self-knowledge and for meekness.¹¹⁰ Elsewhere, he encourages prayer for discernment.¹¹¹ Related to these spiritual desiderata is of course humility, for which Evagrius also encourages prayer.¹¹² At *orat* 37, Evagrius instructs his audience to pray first for purification from passions; second, for deliverance from ignorance and forgetfulness; and third, for deliverance from every temptation and trial.¹¹³ Evagrius also recommends prayer for ‘righteousness and the kingdom’ (Mt. 6.33), which he glosses as virtue and gnosis,¹¹⁴ as well as prayer for God’s mercy.¹¹⁵

One makes these petitions primarily for oneself, but Evagrius was also aware of the importance for praying on behalf of one’s fellow Christians.¹¹⁶ Recalling no doubt James 5.14-15, Evagrius recommends ‘using prayer’ rather than physicians or medicine on behalf of the sick.¹¹⁷ Other remarks he makes are more general, but reinforce the

¹⁰⁹ On supplication, see Evagrius, *skem* 31 (= *cod.* Barb. gr. 515, 18/*cap cogn* 27 (Muyldermans 1931: pp. 53, 61)) and *KG* 5.46 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 197).

¹¹⁰ Evagrius, *epp* 25.6 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 582) and (Bunge 1986a: pp. 237-238): self-knowledge; and 36.3 (p. 590) and (p. 250): meekness

¹¹¹ Evagrius, *cog* 26 (Géhin 1998: pp. 244-247): discernment; cf. *Jm* 1.5.

¹¹² Evagrius, *ant* 8.10 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 538)

¹¹³ Evagrius, *orat* 38 (Tugwell 1981: p. 9). On *ἐγκαταλείψις*, a trial that consists specifically in being abandoned, see *cog* 10 (Géhin 1998: pp. 184-187); *gnos* 28 (Guillaumont 1989: p. 134, with Guillaumont’s extensive notes, pp. 135, 139); *sch* 271 in Prov. 24.15 (Géhin 1987: p. 364); *sch* 4 in Eccl 1.13, 37 in Eccl 5.5-6, 61 in Eccl 7.15 (Géhin 1993: pp. 62, 126, 166); in *Iob* 40.8b (Hagedorn 1994-2000: 3.335 (= *sch.* 28.14)); in *Pss* 36.25κ, 37.22ιγ, 70.11δ, 88.46κβ, 93.18θ, 112.9δ, 118.71λα. Cf. Paphnutius’ discussion of this theme, in Palladius, *HL* 47.3-7 (Bartelink 1974: pp. 226-230) – a conference at which Evagrius was in attendance. See also (Driscoll 1997).

¹¹⁴ Evagrius, *orat* 39 (Tugwell 1981: p. 9); cf. *prak* 90 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.690-691): gnosis is the fruit of the virtues.

¹¹⁵ Evagrius, *orat* 102 (Tugwell 1981: p. 19): since this is what the Publican prayed for; cf. in *Ps* 65.20θ.

¹¹⁶ Recall, too, the requests for the prayers of others and assurance that he prays for them in Evagrius’ letters; e.g., *epp* 12.2, 13.2 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 575) and (Bunge 1986a: pp. 225-226); cf. *Ad mon* 137 (Greßman 1913: p. 165).

¹¹⁷ Evagrius, *cap par* 62 (PG 79.1253): Ἐν τοῖς νόσοις, τῇ προσευχῇ πρὸ τῶν ἰατρῶν καὶ φαρμάκων

point that prayer ought to be offered for others. At Orat. 39, Evagrius makes this point with two curious phrases. ‘It is right to pray not only for one’s own purification, but also for all one’s own, so as to imitate the angelic way.’¹¹⁸ In this translation, ‘one’s own’ stands for *ὁμόφυλοι*, a word that by Evagrius’ time had become a technical term. We find its specialised sense of ‘spiritual kinship’ taking form in the writings of Philo, Clement and Origen.¹¹⁹ It goes without saying that their collective influence on Evagrius was considerable. But the closest parallel to Evagrius’ use occurs elsewhere, in Gregory of Nyssa’s *Life of Moses*.¹²⁰

The second significant phrase is ‘the angelic way’. This is clarified by turning to Evagrius’ angelology as explained in the *Kephalaia Gnostica*. On three separate occasions, Evagrius asserts that the angels have a role in leading humans to the knowledge of God, which is to say, to salvation.¹²¹ We have already encountered Evagrius’ belief in the mediating function of angels.¹²² According to the chapter from *On prayer* under consideration, then, it is possible for the person who prays to emulate this angelic function. This is the foundation for Evagrius’ claim that through prayer man can attain equality with the angels,¹²³ an ideal that he echoes Our Lord in stating.¹²⁴ This

κέχρησο. In taking *πρὸ* to mean ‘rather than’, I follow Suárez’s Latin translation of the text: ‘In morbis, oratione *priusquam* medicis et pharmacis utere.’ This is unquestionably a permissible interpretation, even if ‘before’ is the dominant sense of the word.

¹¹⁸ Evagrius, *orat* 40 (Tugwell 1981: p. 9)

¹¹⁹ Philo, *spec leg* 4.159 (Colson 1929-1943: 8.106-108); Clement, *strom* 7.3.18.3 (Stählin 1909-1936: 3.14)

¹²⁰ Gregory of Nyssa, *u Mos*, esp. at 2.15, 2.310.1-311.4; NB: Moses delivering his ‘kinfolk’ is taken to refer to progress in the spiritual life, e.g., at 2.89-101 and 2.227-231 (Daniélou 1955: pp. 36, 130; 56-57, 105-106).

¹²¹ See Evagrius, *KG* 3.65, 5.7, 6.90 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 125, 179, 255)

¹²² Evagrius, *orat* 40, 74-77, 80-81, 96 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 9, 14-15, 16, 18); *prak* 24, 76 (Guillaumont 1971: pp. 556-557, 664-665); cf. *KG* 3.46, 6.86, 6.88, 6.90 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 117, 253, 255); *ant* pref., 4.9, 4.27 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 472, 504, 506)

¹²³ Evagrius, *orat* 113 (Tugwell 1981: p. 21); cf. *KG* 4.74 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 169)

¹²⁴ Lk 20.36; Evagrius has more immediate precedents in Clement, *paed* 1.6.36.6; *strom* 6.13.105.1.2, 7.10.57.5, 7.12.78.6, 7.14.84.2 (Stählin 1909-1936: 1.111-112, 2.484-485, 3.42, 3.56, 3.60); Origen, *Cels*

complex of ideas helps us make sense of Evagrius' definition of intercession:

'Intercession is entreaty going up to God from the greater for the salvation of others.'¹²⁵

However, it must be noted that Evagrius did not invoke only 'isangelism' to assert the importance of praying for others. This is significant inasmuch as Evagrius' affirmation of human equality with the angels in these passages is bound to suggest other lines of enquiry, specifically, subsequent Origenists' claims about the radical plasticity of the created intellect.¹²⁶ (Such subsequent developments are deeply odd. Since Evagrius had already asserted the fundamental identity of all created rational beings, it is difficult to see what he would gain from saying that humans can become angels, or how he could explain such a transformation.)¹²⁷ For our purposes, it is more to the point to observe that he also notes that priests (*tois hereis*) pray for others.¹²⁸ Moreover, Evagrius teaches, the high priest addresses supplications to God on behalf of everything.¹²⁹ From what we have seen so far, the 'high priest' in question is clearly a description of the perfected Christian. By praying, the Christian acts as the high priest of Creation. We note here, then, that Evagrius is capable of explaining the effects of Christian prayer in terms other than isangelism. This is additional reason for thinking that Evagrius' claims about prayer

4.29 (Koetschau 1899: 1.298.11-16); *Clo* 2.22.140, 13.16.99.5 (Blanc 1966-1992: 1.300, 3.82); *FrCor* 49.32-49 (Jenkins 1907-1909: p. 33); *sel Ps* 26.8 (PG 12.1281); and Gregory of Nyssa, *adu Apoll* (Mueller 1958: p. 212.4-13); *hom* 1.1 *in Cant* (Langerbeck 1960: p. 30.6-8); *uirg* 14.4 (Jaeger 1952: 309.10-15); *opif hom* 17, 18 (PG 44.188, 189, 196); *creat hom* 1 (Hörner 1972: p. 30.4-31.3). Because this term becomes controversial, it is worth noting Gregory's gloss on 'the one equal to the angels' as 'the one equal *in honour* to the angels' at *opif hom* 17.

¹²⁵ Evagrius, *skem* 33 (= *Cod. Barb.* gr. 515, 19/*cap cogn* 28 (Muyldermans 1931: pp. 53, 61))

¹²⁶ This trend is evident from the writings of the Syrian mystic, Stephen bar Sudaili, a pantheistic Origenist; and perhaps in the beliefs of the Origenist 'isochristoi' monks described by Cyril of Scythopolis.

Guillaumont (1962: pp. 155-156) argued that Evagrius was himself an 'isochrist'; but this is to ignore Evagrius' flat statement that Christ is unique, as it were, by definition: e.g., *KG* 6.14, 6.16 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 223). In claiming that Evagrius was an 'isochrist', Guillaumont erred by confusing Evagrius' soteriology and his Christology. As I have argued elsewhere, the evidence Guillaumont notes and more can best be understood in terms of Evagrian theosis, (Casiday forthcoming-c).

¹²⁷ See (Casiday forthcoming-a). It is also worth noting that, at *opif hom* 17 (PG 44.188-189) Gregory of Nyssa glosses 'those equal to the angels' as 'those equal *in honour* to the angels'.

should be understood in *functional*, not *ontological*, terms – that is, humans do not (ontologically) become angels, they become (functionally) equal to angels.¹³⁰

The crowning petition, however, is without doubt that taught by Our Lord: ‘Thy will be done.’ As Evagrius elsewhere states, ‘Prayer should occur with watchfulness, so that we should not petition God for things that do not please Him’.¹³¹ So important for Evagrius is the affirmation of God’s will rather than our own that he lingers over the theme at some length.¹³² By doing so, Evagrius forcefully repudiates any self-seeking that would effectively amount to praying, ‘My will be done’.¹³³ Or rather, as an ascetic theologian, Evagrius insists that the will of the person praying must be brought into line with God’s will.¹³⁴ If this transformation does not occur, the consequences will be dire: God will condemn that person’s prayer, as Evagrius’ scholium on Proverbs 28.9 (‘He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, his prayer shall be an abomination’) makes clear. ‘It is not the law that condemns someone’s prayer, but rather He who gave the law – God; as Paul also said, “scripture has gone out” *etc.* (Gal. 3.8), instead of Him who gave scripture.’¹³⁵ This condemnation need not take the form of the prayer being rejected, of course, which is a fact Evagrius learned through hard experience,

I have often in my prayers asked for something to be done for me
which I thought was good, and I insisted on my petition, unreasonably

¹²⁸ Evagrius, *prak* 100 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.710-711)

¹²⁹ Evagrius, *KG* 5.46 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 197)

¹³⁰ See Evagrius, *orat* 40 (Tugwell 1981: p. 9); cf. Bunge 1989b, p. 101: ‘Es ist dem Menschen daher durchaus möglich, *ohne doch ein Engel zu sein*, “wie ein Engel zu leben” (*KG* III, 76) und ob seiner Reinheit einen “fast engelischen Zustand” zu erreichen (in Ps 118,171 *οθ*) und “engelgleich zu werden” (Cr 113).’ Emphasis added. Bamberger (1970: p. 74), however, translates *isangelos* as ‘another angel’ rather than ‘equal to the angels’; cf. Wagenaar 1969, p. 524. This interpretation ultimately looks back to Epiphanius, *pan*; cf. Guillaumont 1962, pp. 113-116. I would question the propriety of relying on the reconstruction of a hostile witness to make sense of elliptical passages in Evagrius’ writings.

¹³¹ Evagrius, *cap par* 42 (PG 79.1252)

¹³² Evagrius, *orat* 31-34 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 7-8)

¹³³ Evagrius, *orat* 32 (Tugwell 1981: p. 8)

¹³⁴ Evagrius, *orat* 89 (Tugwell 1981: p. 17)

¹³⁵ Evagrius, *sch* 346 in Prov. 28.9 (Géhin 1987: p. 438)

forcing God's will instead of leaving it to Him to provide what He knows to be profitable. And after all, when I got what I was asking for, I bitterly regretted that I had chosen to ask for my own will to be done, because the thing did not turn out as I had expected.¹³⁶

If we turn once more to the question of whether Evagrius meant us to understand prayer as a genuinely conversational activity, this passage gives us an unmistakable verdict. By insisting that God grant his request, Evagrius shouted down God, so to speak, and refused to listen to God. In the end, of course, God's will was not thwarted by Evagrius' obstinacy, and Evagrius learned from his bitter regret to be still and await God's response. By his own account, then, these prayers of Evagrius' were undeserving of the name.

We have noted that Evagrius expected the Christian's will to approximate to God's will. As the segment of the treatise devoted to this theme progresses, it traces the maturing of this process. At *orat* 31, Evagrius cautions against praying for one's own will to be done and recalls the Scriptural command to pray, 'Thy will be done in me' (Mt. 6.10). In the next chapter, Evagrius relates from his own experience how badly things turn out when God deigns to grant the petitions of a selfish prayer. Then, at *orat* 33, Evagrius again echoes Scripture in pointing out that 'none is good, save God only' (Mk. 10.18) and that God, being good, will give to those who ask of Him (Mt. 7.11). The trustful attitude evident in this calm acceptance of God's benevolence is a marked departure from insisting that one's desires be met. So when, at *orat* 34, Evagrius exhorts his reader not to be disheartened when God seems not to respond, he can legitimately do so exactly because by this stage the reader's will has been reoriented so as to be at one with God's will. (It is here, incidentally, that *hesychia* seems most appropriate in Evagrian theology – the quiet moment in which prayer gives way to contemplation, the

¹³⁶ Evagrius, *orat* 32 (Tugwell 1981: p. 8),

pause in conversation so that God is allowed to respond.¹³⁷) In this context, it makes perfect sense for Evagrius now to laud prayer itself – ‘conversing and consorting with God’ – as supremely more desirable than whatever occasional benefits God might bestow upon the one who prays.

It is worth just stressing the point, because it allows us to understand what Evagrius means when he says that prayer ‘stabilises’ the wandering mind.¹³⁸ This stability must be fundamentally dynamic, since by its very nature the intellect is highly mobile: ‘The mind does not stop giving birth [sc., to thoughts]; so you extirpate the bad ones, and cultivate the good ones.’¹³⁹ Prayer, then, stabilises this natural movement of the mind in its trajectory toward God. It accomplishes this by contributing to the subsistence of the memory of God in the soul,¹⁴⁰ which in turn makes one’s thought ‘become heaven’.¹⁴¹ When necessary, prayer also accomplishes this by encouraging repentance and by staving off provocation and annoyance.¹⁴² Thus one’s intellect becomes the ‘Temple of God’.¹⁴³ The abiding presence of God in the intellect, as in God’s temple, is obviously of far greater importance than any particular boon God might offer.

¹³⁷ Evagrius speaks of *hesychia* in the following passages: *orat* 111 (Tugwell 1981: p. 21); *rer mon rat* 2-3, 5-9 (PG 40.1255-1261); *silentio* (Muyldermans 1952: pp. 118-119); *ant* pref. (Frankenberg 1912: p. 472); *λογισμῶν*; *Ad Eul* 18 (PG 79.1117); *sch* 17 in Prov. 1.33, *sch* 141 in Prov. 15.15 (Géhin 1987: pp. 111, 238); *Ad mon* 98 (Greßman 1913: p. 161).

¹³⁸ Evagrius, *prak* 15 (Guillaumont 1971: pp. 536-537); *ἵστησιν*; cf. *cog* 26 (Géhin 1998: pp. 246-247); *KG* 1.85 (Muyldermans 1932: p. 50.17-20).

¹³⁹ Evagrius, *cap par* 70 (PG 79.1256): *Οὐ παύσεται ἡ διάνοια τίκτουσα· σὺ δὲ τοὺς μὲν φαύλους ἔκτειλε, τοὺς δὲ ἀγαθοὺς γεώργησον.* Cf. *prak* 48 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.608-609)

¹⁴⁰ Evagrius, *adm par* 3 (Muyldermans 1952: pp. 126, 157)

¹⁴¹ Evagrius, *cap par* 43 (PG 79.1252): *Ἀεὶ μνημόνευε τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ οὐρανὸς ἡ διάνοια σου γίνηται.*

¹⁴² Evagrius, *paraenesis* 36 (Muyldermans 1952: pp. 131, 161): repentance; *orat* 12 (Tugwell 1981: p. 5): provocation and annoyance

¹⁴³ Evagrius, *skem* 37 (= *cod. Barb.* gr. 515, 13/*cap cogn* 32 (Muyldermans 1931: pp. 53, 62)): ‘Mens est templum sanctae Trinitatis.’ Cf. *KG* 5.84 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 213); *cap par* 118 (PG 79.1260).

At this stage, prayer is indistinct from the contemplation of the ‘principles of existence’ and of God.¹⁴⁴ So it is possible for Evagrius to speak of prayer itself as the knowledge of the Holy Trinity, and to link prayer with seeing heavenly visions.¹⁴⁵ Such visions include the famous, and famously difficult, vision of the ‘holy light’. Evagrius did not judge himself competent to account for this phenomenon and it would appear that on this matter he preserved the reverential silence he learnt from John the Seer of Thebaid.¹⁴⁶ This is not to suggest that the theme does not recur, for it is widely evident in Evagrius’ writings. But what is notable is that Evagrius refrains from speculating on this light, simply finding in it evidence of the presence of the Holy Trinity.¹⁴⁷ This is precisely what we should expect: *theoria*, or contemplation, primarily connotes vision.¹⁴⁸ We notice, however, that Evagrius’ account of the holy light, chiefly in the preface to the *Antirrheticus*, has an unmistakably strong intellectualist cast: the holy light illumines the eye of the intellect.¹⁴⁹

When Evagrius describes the ‘limits of prayer’, however, he does so in terms that counterpoint the strongly intellectual terms invoked in describing the holy light.

¹⁴⁴ Evagrius, *orat* 52 (Tugwell 1981: p. 11). Indeed, Hausherr (1960: p. 76) asserts that ‘le but suprême, la contemplation de Dieu, coïncide avec l’état d’oraison.’ He refers to the following texts: *orat* 145 (Tugwell 1981: p. 26); *epp* 17.3, 39.5 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 578, 592) and (Bunge 1986a: pp. 230, 253-254).

¹⁴⁵ Evagrius, *KG* 1.87 (Muyldermans 1931: p. 58); 3.30, 3.61 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 111, 123); *epp* 56.1-3, 58 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 602-604, 606-608) and (Bunge 1986a: pp. 271-272, 276-278): knowledge of the Holy Trinity.

¹⁴⁶ Evagrius, *ant* 6.16 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 524)

¹⁴⁷ E.g., Evagrius, *ant* pref., 4.61, 6.16 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 474, 510, 524); *cog* 15.10-15, 37.32-35, 39, 40 (Géhin 1998: pp. 204, 282, 286-290); *KG* 1.35, 2.29 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 33, 73); *skem* 4; 29-30; 34 (= *Cod. Barb. gr.* 515, 3; 17/*cap cogn* 4; 26; 30 (Muyldermans 1931: pp. 51, 58; 53, 61)): ‘Mentis status est sublimitas intelligibilis caelesti similis colori, quo lumen sanctae Trinitatis ad tempus orationis superuenit’; ‘Oratio est status mentis, omnis terrenae notitiae corruptius. Oratio est status mentis, factus a lumine solo sanctae Trinitatis’; ‘Infernus est regiuncula sine lumine plena tenebris aeternis et caligine’; *Cod. Barb. gr.* 515, 56 (Muyldermans 1931: p. 56): ἀνὴρ θυμώδης οὐκ ὄψεται φῶς· καὶ ἀκάθαρτος οὐ συνήσει αὐτό; *prou et exp* 6, (Muyldermans 1952: p. 135): ‘Those who bless the Saviour will see the light, but shadows are in the souls of the impious’; *gnos* 45 (Guillaumont 1989: p. 178); *epp* 17.3, 39.5 and 58.6 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 578, 592, 608) and (Bunge 1986a: pp. 230, 253-254, 278). See also A. Guillaumont’s seminal study on this topic, Guillaumont 1984.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Lampe 1961, s.v.

Characteristic of this state are a great longing for God, a withdrawal from the flesh and all the thoughts associated with it (regardless of their source), and a fullness of reverence together with joy.¹⁵⁰ Already Clement had used exactly this word for ‘longing’ (*pothos*) to describe the disposition necessary for understanding and the proper Christian orientation toward God in prayer, and had also used the verbal form to describe prayer.¹⁵¹

And so we raise up the head and lift hands to heaven, and put feet in motion at the final recitation of the prayer, following with eagerness of the spirit to the intellectual essence; and endeavouring by reason to withdraw the body from the earth, raising aloft the soul *winged with longing for better things*, we force it to advance to the holy places, magnanimously putting off the chains of the flesh. For well do we know that the Gnostic passes out [from the bondage] of the whole world, as indeed the Jews did [from the bondage] of Egypt, showing clearly that, above all else, he would be as near as possible to God.¹⁵²

Thus, prayer is the ascent of the intellect to God in a movement of joy, love, reverence and longing.

- The dangers and temptations faced by the one at prayer

One last point about Evagrius’ teaching on prayer should be considered, and that is what sort of dangers beset one who prays. Since Evagrius is a monastic theologian and ascetic practice is a prime concern for him, it is unsurprising that he would be keenly interested in calling his readers’ attention to potential problems in living according to these teachings. And of course Evagrius’ well-deserved renown as a keen student of psychology (or, more often, psychopathology) is founded on precisely his attentive care in cataloguing the various temptations and the consequences of sin. Without digressing

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Evagrius, *KG* 2.28 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 71-73)

¹⁵⁰ Evagrius, *orat* 62 (Tugwell 1981: p. 12)

¹⁵¹ Clement, *strom* 8.1.2.3.2-3, *ecl* 36 (Stählin 1909-1936: 3.80, 148); cf. Clement’s account of the Gnostic’s desire to be spiritual at *strom* 7.7.44.5-6 (Stählin 1909-1936: 3.33).

to recapitulate Evagrian psychology,¹⁵³ it will be worthwhile to note the points at which it intersects his teaching on prayer. Perhaps it is misleading, though, to frame this overview in terms of Evagrian psychology, because while the dangers Evagrius are undeniably psychological in scope, he constantly ascribes the source of these dangers to the demons.¹⁵⁴

The demons were a source of unremitting conflict for the Fathers of the Egyptian Desert – and for the Mothers of the Desert no less, as the redoubtable Amma Syncletica makes perfectly clear.¹⁵⁵ Evagrius' great *Antirrheticus* was written to provide the monks with a store of prayers to dart up to Heaven when the demons attack. Although Evagrius had an eminent predecessor teaching antirrhetic prayer in the person of Antony the Great,¹⁵⁶ his own teaching is based on personal experience.¹⁵⁷ His biographer was not distorting Evagrius' concerns when he mentioned that demons attacked Evagrius, sometimes physically, sometimes intellectually.¹⁵⁸ In the *Praktikos*, Evagrius offers a first-hand account of being tempted to vainglory when he had made some progress in the spiritual life: 'I have known the demon of vainglory to be harried by nearly all the other demons and, when they have fallen, shamelessly draw near and illustrate to the monk all

¹⁵² Clement, *strom* 7.7.40.1-2 (Stählin 1909-1936: 3.30); the clause in brackets, [from the bondage], translates *ὑπέκβασις τοῦ κτλ.*, which suggests departing from under something and I think this can helpfully be understood as the yoke of servitude.

¹⁵³ Bamberger 1970; Géhin 1998, pp. 9-33; Stewart 2001

¹⁵⁴ E.g., Evagrius, *orat* 68, 72, 73, 91-100, 106, 107, 109, 111-112, 137, 139, 140, 148 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 13, 14, 17-19, 20, 21, 25, 27); *ant*, *passim*; *cap par* 78 (PG 79.1256); *cog* 2, 42 (Géhin 1998: pp. 154-157, 296-297) to which cf. (Géhin 1996), pp. 71-73; *prak* 5, 46 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.504, 602-605); *skem* 27 (= *cap cogn* 24, (Muyldermans 1931: p. 61)).

¹⁵⁵ *apoph* Sarah 1, 2; Syncletica 7, 15, 18, 24; cf. 14 (PG 65.420, 424-428; N.B.: Syncletica 24 = S7 (Guy 1962: p. 35))

¹⁵⁶ Athanasius, *u Ant* 9.2-3, 13.7 (Bartelink 1994: pp. 158, 170-172)

¹⁵⁷ *HL copt* 38.8H-I (Amélineau 1887: p. 115)

¹⁵⁸ By night, demons attacked Evagrius with bull-hide whips (ταύρεα), leaving wounds that his biographer saw the following day: *HL copt* 38.8H, (Amélineau 1887: p. 115). Three demons, appearing in the form of heretical clerics, accost Evagrius: Palladius, *HL* 38.11 (Bartelink 1974: p. 200); see also *ibid*, *recensio*

his virtues.’¹⁵⁹ This composite picture would seem hopelessly grim if not for the anecdote told in the Coptic Life about Evagrius successfully exorcising the wife of a tribune in Palestine.¹⁶⁰ (This sort of accomplishment is precisely what we would not expect to learn from Evagrius himself, who would have been too conscious of pride to relate it.) When we take into account the extent to which Evagrius was aware of the demons, it becomes obvious that to neglect or explain away this aspect of his thought is to distort our understanding of it. We would thus do Evagrius a grave disservice if we attempted to demythologise all this so his writings could be more conveniently manipulated as a case of Late Antique psychological theory.

Evagrius’ demonology has a great bearing on his teaching on prayer. As a privileged means of nearness to God, prayer is an obvious target for demonic attack. ‘The whole war between us and the unclean demons is about nothing else except spiritual prayer, because spiritual prayer is particularly offensive and intolerable to them and particularly beneficial and propitious for us.’¹⁶¹ So, in a classic juxtaposition of psychological and demonological idioms remarkably jarring to the modern reader, Evagrius notes that demons are capable of inspiring memories that can cause sadness and chagrin, the effects of which are devastating for spiritual progress.¹⁶² Elsewhere, he cautions his reader about the dangers of demonic opposition in more general terms.¹⁶³ In

longior (Butler 1967: 1.131-135); and *HL copt* 38.11 (Amélineau 1887: pp. 121-124); cf. *Ad mon* 126 (Gießman 1913: p. 164).

¹⁵⁹ Evagrius, *prak* 31 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.572)

¹⁶⁰ Evagrius exorcised the demoniac wife of a tribune in Palestine ‘by a single prayer’: *HL copt* 38.10M (Amélineau 1887: pp. 118-119).

¹⁶¹ Evagrius, *orat* 50 (Tugwell 1981: p. 10)

¹⁶² Evagrius, *orat* 10, 45-47, 49 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 4-5, 10): demonically inspired (10, 47) memories causing sadness (cf. *cog* 36.13-17 (Géhin 1998: p. 278)) and chagrin.

¹⁶³ Evagrius, *orat* 49, 50, 90-100, 106-109, 133-140 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 10, 17-19, 20-21, 24-25)

one chapter, Evagrius enumerates some of the vicious passions that are the demons' tools in this unholy resistance to prayer:

Of what interest is it to the demons to produce gluttony, fornication, love of money, anger and resentment and all the other passions in us, except that they weaken the mind so that it cannot pray as it should? When it is ruled by the passions of the irrational part in us, they do not permit it to operate rationally and to seek the Word of God.¹⁶⁴

Irénée Hausherr has commented on the corporeal dimensions of this passage.

This is an important observation, since Evagrius regards direct action upon the intellect as a strictly divine prerogative, and therefore the demons are only capable of acting on the intellect through manipulating the body.¹⁶⁵ 'That is just why it is so important to free oneself from the passion: it is only at the summit of contemplation or prayer that we will truly be ourselves by the deifying vision of God.'¹⁶⁶ The ascetic imperative is unavoidable, as Evagrius makes clear with this stern warning:

Anyone who is ensnared in sins and fits of temper and yet dares to aspire shamelessly to the knowledge of divine things or to embark on immaterial prayer, ought to take to himself the apostolic rebuke, as it is not without danger for him to pray with his head bare and uncovered.¹⁶⁷ Such a soul, it says, ought to exercise control over its head because of the angels standing by (1 Cor. 11.10), clothing itself in a fitting sense of shame and humility.¹⁶⁸

The ascent to the heights of prayer is therefore highly dangerous for one who is unprepared.¹⁶⁹

But another equally important theme in Evagrius' account of prayer is traceable to his awareness of the body's role in praying. The body is susceptible to opposition, and

¹⁶⁴ Evagrius, *orat* 51 (Tugwell 1981: p. 11). See also Hausherr's extensive discussion of 'anthropologie origénienne': Hausherr 1960, pp. 72-75.

¹⁶⁵ Evagrius, *orat* 64 (Tugwell 1981: p. 13); cf. *prak* 37-38, 47-48 (Guillaumont 1971: 2.584-587, 606-609); *gnos* 4 (Guillaumont 1989: p. 92). For general remarks by Evagrius on the body, see also *KG* 1.6, 3.29, 4.60, 4.62, 4.82 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 19, 109, 163, 173). Related to this is Evagrius' contention that only God is *cardiognostos*: *cog* 37.1-4 (Géhin 1998: p. 280).

¹⁶⁶ Hausherr 1960, pp. 74-75.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Evagrius, *ep* 7.1 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 570-572) and (Bunge 1986a: p. 220)

¹⁶⁸ Evagrius, *orat* 145 (Tugwell 1981: p. 26)

¹⁶⁹ Evagrius, *orat* 146, 147 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 26-27)

this susceptibility limits the scope of activity of the created intellect.¹⁷⁰ Although Evagrius does not clarify exactly what this susceptibility to opposition entails, it is reasonable to understand it with reference to the natural mobility of the intellect.¹⁷¹ The stabilising influence of prayer, considered above, can thus be understood as the calming effect of the presence of God on the hyperactive creature. This in turn helps us appreciate the awful danger posed by distraction:

Just because the intellect is not tarrying with bare thoughts of things, it has not necessarily yet reached the place of prayer, for it can still be in the contemplation of things, amusing itself with their underlying reasons. And even if they are bare words, because they are contemplations of things, they make an impression on the intellect and give it a particular shape and lead it far from God.¹⁷²

God is beyond opposition, and therefore beyond definition.¹⁷³ On this basis, Evagrius can argue quite pointedly that concepts, to the extent that they distort the experience of encountering God, must be repudiated.

Evagrius anticipates the apophatic theology of Denys the Areopagite in this matter. Denys' term *ἀνοησία* suggests a useful if inelegant neologism that we might employ, for want of anything better, to describe Evagrius' position as 'anoetic'.¹⁷⁴ As we shall see, this anoetic tendency in Evagrian theology generates a number of complexities with regard to the place of Christ in Christian prayer. But of that more shall be said momentarily. At present, it is more urgent to stress that Evagrius' anoetic insistence is only superficially negative, for the real significance of it is not in the rejection of concepts *per se*. Rather, its real significance is that it reinforces the attitude of attentive

¹⁷⁰ E.g., Evagrius, *KG* 1.2 (Muyldermans 1931: p. 56), 1.64, 2.18, 2.85 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 47, 69, 95), 3.59 (Hausherr 1939b: p. 230).

¹⁷¹ Cf. Evagrius, *KG* 1.46 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 39), 1.85 (Muyldermans 1932: p. 50); *cog* 26 (Géhin 1998: pp. 246-247); *cap par* 70 (PG 79.1256).

¹⁷² Evagrius, *orat* 57 (Tugwell 1981: p. 11)

¹⁷³ Evagrius, *KG* 1.1, 1.2 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 17)

openness toward God that is the basis of Evagrian prayer. In this connection, the following litany of blessings Evagrius calls down up the person who prays appropriately can be read as a running description of anoetic prayer.

I shall say my piece, which I have told even the novices:¹⁷⁵ blessed is the intellect that at the time of prayer has possessed perfect formlessness.

Blessed is the intellect that at the time of prayer becomes free of material and possession.

Blessed is the intellect that, praying without distraction, always receives above and beyond a full desire.

Blessed is the intellect that at the time of prayer possess perfect insensitivity.¹⁷⁶

Thus, anoetic prayer is prayer that is independent of concepts (noemata).¹⁷⁷

Having now surveyed the scope of prayer in Evagrian theology, we shall summarise the findings before proceeding to elaborate on some of the knottier problems that it presents. We have found in Evagrius' writings a persistent concern that prayer be a state of openness toward God. I have argued that this is the context in which to understand properly his emphasis on anoetic prayer. I have further argued that, in light of the weakness of the fallen human condition and the constant menace of the demons, Evagrius sees maintaining this state as an effortful undertaking. Prayer is an integral part of the monk's life. To be precise, prayer is the loftiest attainment of the monks' ascetic life. But here we must note that Evagrius did not portray the monastic life as somehow thinner than secular life. To the contrary, the life of the monks is by far the more robust

¹⁷⁴ Lampe 1961: *ἀνοησία*, 2: state of being beyond intelligence. For further development of this suggestion, see Casiday, forthcoming-b.

¹⁷⁵ *Coislin* 109 has a variant reading: 'which I have already said elsewhere' (i.e., reading ἐν ἑτέροις for νεωτέροις); for an analysis of the merits of each reading, see Hausherr 1960, pp. 150-153. I follow Tugwell.

¹⁷⁶ Evagrius, *orat* 117-120 (Tugwell 1981: p. 22)

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Evagrius, *ep* 56.1-2 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 602-604) and (Bunge 1986a: pp. 271-272); *ps-suppl* 23 (= *cap cogn* 22, (Muyldermans 1931: p. 60)): 'Mens aliquando quidem a notitia (ἐνοήματα) transgreditur in notitiam, interdum a contemplatione in speculationem, et rursus a notitia in speculationem, et a

of the two. The enduring joys of the monastic life, according to Evagrius, are incomparably higher than the fleeting joys of this world. Once more, prayer is the most sublime of these joys. From this, and from other scattered references to emotions properly used, we see that Evagrius had a great sense for the place of emotion in the spiritual life. Indeed, prayerful communion with God is the pinnacle of joys. Still, prayer is not an individualistic pursuit; as Evagrius' emphasis on supplicatory prayer makes clear, prayer binds together the community of the faithful. Thus, prayer is the capstone of Christian life in all its guises.

- The body of Christ and Christian prayer¹⁷⁸

‘If you are a theologian, you will pray truly; and if you pray truly, you will be a theologian’¹⁷⁹ – had Evagrius written nothing other than this lapidary sentence, it alone would have secured his enduring reputation. And indeed, if he had written nothing else, his reputation might have fared very much better with posterity than it did. As it stands, Evagrius, together with Origen and Didymus the Blind, was anathematised nearly a century and a half after his death around the time of the Fifth Ecumenical Council – largely, it would appear, because their common metaphysics was considered heretical.¹⁸⁰

speculatione in notitiam. Accedit uero ut et ab informi statu ad notitias, aut ad speculationes, et ab his rursus ad informem recurrit; hoc uero ipsi contingit sub tempore orationis.’

¹⁷⁸ The material that follows was presented to the Patristics Seminar of the Department of Theology, University of Durham, on 8 February, 2001. The rigorous questions and insightful remarks of Prof. Andrew Louth and Messrs. Mika Törönen, Eric Northway, and Adam Cooper are reflected in the present form this section has taken, and I express my gratitude to them for this.

¹⁷⁹ Evagrius, *orat* 61; see fn. 28.

¹⁸⁰ See, e.g., the canons: (Straub 1971: pp. 240-245); and Justinian, *c Orig* and *ed c Orig* (Schwartz 1940: pp. 189-214). Although they were transmitted with the council's acts, it is highly unlikely that the condemnations resulted from the Council. See, e.g., Hombergen 2001: pp. 309-315; I regret that this excellent study was not available to me in time for me to incorporate Fr Hombergen's results into the present work.

Since the publication of Antoine Guillaumont's definitive monograph, *Les 'Kephalalaia Gnostica' d'Évagre le Pontique et l'histoire de l'Origénisme chez les Grecs et chez les Syriens*,¹⁸¹ it has been generally accepted that in 553 the Fathers of the Fifth Ecumenical Council condemned, not Origenism in general, but Evagrian Origenism in particular.¹⁸² The flashpoint of the controversy, according to Guillaumont, is Evagrius' Christology, which Guillaumont reckons is substantially identical to the Christology of the Palestinian Origenists described by Cyril of Scythopolis. In his *Life of Sabas*, Cyril describes the Origenist monks who converged on the New Lavra and from there propagated 'their own foul heresy'.¹⁸³ What seems to have been so monstrous and objectionable is only hinted at in this *Life*,¹⁸⁴ but is fully treated in Cyril's account of his meeting with Cyriacus. Cyriacus' uncompromising denunciation of the Origenists draws together the themes that this section will explore, so it is worth quoting at some length what he says.

The teachings about pre-existence are not neutral and free of danger, but dangerous, harmful and blasphemous. That I might convince you, in a few words I shall attempt to establish their exceedingly diverse impiety. They say that Christ is not one of the Trinity; they say that the bodies we have from the resurrection will pass to complete destruction, and Christ's first; they say that the Holy Trinity did not fashion the world and that at the restoration all rational beings – even the very demons – will be able to fashion aeons; they say that our bodies will be raised ethereal and spherical at the resurrection, and so too they claim that even the body of the Lord was raised thus; they say that we become equals to Christ at the restoration. What hell, then, spewed out these things? They have not learnt them from the God who spoke through the prophets and apostles – not so! – but they have retrieved these filthy and irreverent teachings from Pythagoras and Plato, from Origen, Evagrius, and Didymus. I am amazed at what vain and futile labours they have squandered on such harmful and laborious vanities, and how they have thus armed their tongues against piety. Should they not rather have extolled and praised brotherly love, hospitality, virginity, almsgiving, psalmody, all-night vigils and tears of compunction? Ought they not rather be disciplining the body with

¹⁸¹ Guillaumont 1962

¹⁸² Guillaumont 1962, esp. pp. 156-159.

¹⁸³ Cyril, *u Sab* 83 (Schwartz 1939: p. 188.18-19)

¹⁸⁴ E.g., Cyril, *u Sab* 36 (Schwartz 1939: p. 124.21-29); *ibid.* 90 (p. 199.1-6)

fasts, journeying to God by prayer and making this life a rehearsal for death,¹⁸⁵ and not prating with such babble?

And the elder said, 'But they did not want to walk on the humble path of Christ; instead, "they became futile in their thoughts and their foolish heart was darkened: professing to be wise, they became fools."' ¹⁸⁶

Cyriacus' forthrightness is not unusual. Evidence strongly suggests that his monastic forefathers, the Desert Fathers, also took heresy quite seriously, even if their reactions were often tempered.¹⁸⁷ But it appears that by the time of Cyriacus, the great calm of Abba Sopatrus when faced with these controversial subjects was unfortunately a thing of the past.¹⁸⁸ Nonetheless, it is worth pausing for a moment, to take in Cyriacus' sweeping criticism. We note that he bundles together a number of theological abominations that would be completely ridiculous if they were not so damnably blasphemous. The connective thread of these claims is that they all attempt an unsuccessful negotiation of the problem of God's simplicity and creation's multiplicity. This is generally expressed in terms of bodies, as when at the restoration of all things (Origen's famous *apokatastasis*) all bodies will be annihilated – even, be it noted, the perfect 'etherial and spherical bodies' of the resurrection.¹⁸⁹ After listing his bill of particulars, Cyriacus offers an account of how these aberrant beliefs came to pass. He finds it natural enough to suppose this came of mixing pagan sophistries with Christian truths. The guilty parties in Palestine are drawing heavily from the terrible threesome of Alexandrian Christianity who were supremely talented at mixing these two – presumably

¹⁸⁵ We can only wonder whether Cyril was conscience of the striking echo of Socrates' definition of philosophy as 'rehearsal for death' at Phaed 80e2-81a2 (cf. *ibid.* 67d-e; *Apol* 28c-41c) in this claim of Cyriacus'.

¹⁸⁶ Cyril, *u Cyriac* 12-13 (Schwartz 1939: pp. 229.32-230.26)

¹⁸⁷ E.g., *apoph* Agatho 5, Theodore of Pheme 4, Poemen 118, and Chomes (PG 65.109, 188, 352-353, 436)

¹⁸⁸ *apoph* Sopatrus (PG 65.413)

¹⁸⁹ A.-J. Festugière (1961: p. 78) has called this 'l'attribution à Origène de la doctrine saugrenue du corps sphéroïde des ressuscités'. See also Festugière, 1959.

discontinuous – systems of knowledge: Origen, Evagrius and Didymus. What these rascals ought to have been doing (and by this point, it is not clear whether Cyriacus refers to his contemporaries or the notorious three) is promoting virtue in their writings and indeed in their lives. For our purposes, Cyriacus' claim that they should have been 'ascending to God in prayer' is notable – and ironic.

Quite apart from the question of how the maligned monks were interpreting and applying Origen's, Evagrius' and Didymus' teachings, it has recently been shown that Cyriacus' accounts are not historically trustworthy.¹⁹⁰ What should be avoided at all costs, then, is the nearly instinctive (but methodologically precarious and highly dubious!) attempt to advance our understanding of Evagrius and company on the basis of the putative evidence provided by Cyriacus and the heresiologists.¹⁹¹ With the recovery over the last century of an astounding amount of Evagriana, it is possible and indeed desirable in the study of Evagrian theology to eschew the unquestionably biased ancient witnesses in favour of textual evidence from Evagrius himself. As for the other prong of Cyriacus' criticism, anyone with even a passing acquaintance with Evagrius' writings would be stunned almost speechless by the claim that he should have spent more time in exhortation and the cultivation of ascetic virtues like vigilance, charity, chastity, hospitality and prayerfulness.

In the present section, our goal will be rather more circumspect than attempting a full-scale assessment of Cyriacus' claims and/or the fidelity of the Palestinian monks to

¹⁹⁰ Hombergen 2001.

¹⁹¹ This is precisely the technique of such eminent scholars as Elizabeth Clark, Antoine Guillaumont and Irénée Hausherr. For Clark's perspective, see Clark 1992 and more recently Clark 1998. It is to his great credit that Fr. Gabriel Bunge has eschewed this evidence in coming to his conclusions about Evagrius. On this basis, I consider as basically misguided Michael O'Laughlin's criticism (1992: p. 531) that, in so doing, Bunge has rendered Evagrius 'much less interesting, much less paradoxical, much less important',

their Alexandrian masters. Now, whether or not his diagnosis is accurate with respect to Evagrius, Cyriacus has set his finger on some important themes that recur in Evagrius' writings and claimed in doing so that these themes are radically inconsistent. What we will consider in the rest of this section is how Evagrius himself attempted to hold together the abstract theories of his theological scheme and the onerous practicalities of his monastic life. This will be done with reference to three points that emerged in Cyriacus' depiction of Origenism, *viz.*, Christ, the body and prayer. And it must be noted straightaway that to a great extent, Cyriacus' blunt criticisms obscure some underlying problems that are very much more important than most of the outrageous beliefs that he delineates. We proceed now to this set of very complicated problems.

All these problems can be conveniently related to this question: according to Evagrius, does Christ have a place in Christian prayer? The difficulty that this question poses may not be self-evident, so some background is in order. (All of these points will be examined in greater detail presently.) First, Evagrius obviously recognises that Christ is embodied. In fact, according to Evagrius it is a matter of definition that Christ has a body.¹⁹² Second, Evagrius stringently precludes material imagination from prayer. These strictures are rooted in his ascetic psychology in a way that we might summarise as follows: matter is multiple and tends to dispersal and distraction, whereas prayer is a gathering and focusing of the Christian's faculties directed attentively to God. Third, as the Benedictine hermit and scholar, Fr. Gabriel Bunge, has convincingly demonstrated in

that he is not 'discussing the same issues' as Guillaumont, and that they are not even 'discussing the same Evagrius' – whatever on earth that might mean.

¹⁹² Evagrius, *KG* 6.14 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 223)

two very impressive articles, prayer for Evagrius is decidedly triadocentric.¹⁹³ By this, Fr. Gabriel means, ‘Prayer is inspired *praise* and *thanksgiving* to God, “for all that he made” [Ep. Mel. 31], for the “unfathomable love” of the Father [Ep. Mel. 14], which is operative in his “power and wisdom”, i.e. in the Son and the Spirit [Ep. Mel. 5-6].’¹⁹⁴ But at the same time, Evagrius clearly distinguishes between Christ and the Holy Trinity.¹⁹⁵ This is perhaps nothing unusual: it was neither the Father nor the Spirit who became incarnate for our sake, but the Son only. With these points in mind, it is easier to see exactly why the question of Christ’s place in Christian prayer is an important one. If Christ has a body and prayer tends to transcend bodily categories; and if Christ is not identical to the Trinity, Who are ultimately the recipient of Christian prayer, then is it possible for Evagrius to allow a place for Christ in Christian prayer?

To grapple with this problem, we will need to bring several related aspects of Evagrian thought into the discussion. Thus, for instance, we will make some general observations about the Eucharist in Evagrius’ writings. We will also consider his teaching on the resurrection. These digressions constitute the necessary preparation for successfully addressing the epistemological consequences of Christ’s incarnation according to Evagrius and for elaborating on the theological technique Evagrius used to relate the particularity of Christ’s body to the infinity of God’s bodilessness. We will then follow Fr. Gabriel Bunge’s research in comparing this to the relationship of psalmody and prayer in Evagrian ascetic practice. This is relevant to the discussion at

¹⁹³ Bunge 1987; Bunge 1989a. Note too Evagrius’ recommendation of Ps. 37.22 as a ‘beautiful poem to prayer [...] since it contains the Holy Trinity’: *in Ps 37.22* γ’, Καλὸν προοίμιον προσευχῆς... ἔχει γὰρ ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ τὴν ἁγίαν Τριάδα.

¹⁹⁴ Bunge 1986c: p. 204

¹⁹⁵ See, e.g., *KG* 5.69, in which Evagrius contrasts Christ and the Trinity on the basis of a typological reading of Gen. 2.9; and, what is likely the *KG*’s most definitive Christological statement, 6.14 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 207-223).

hand because Evagrius typically links prayer to the Trinity and psalmody to Christ – so perhaps the way Evagrius relates prayer and psalmody can shed light on how he relates the Trinity and Christ, or indeed how he relates Christ to prayer. This will leave us well placed to appreciate the significance of Christ's body for prayer according to Evagrius.

- The problem of material vision and the desire to see Christ

To begin, we will set out the problems encountered in the attempt to specify Christ's place in Evagrian prayer. Our point of departure will be Evagrius' strict prohibition against the desire to see Christ sensibly.

Do not long to see angels or powers or Christ sensibly, lest at length
you grow mad, accepting a wolf in place of a shepherd and venerating
your enemies, the demons.¹⁹⁶

By pointing to the risk of demonic delusion inherent in visions of this kind, Evagrius invokes a whole network of associations from his writings about demonic activity linked with sense perceptions and physical activities.¹⁹⁷ We come once more, then, to Evagrius' persistent accentuation of the 'immaterial' character of prayer.¹⁹⁸ But elsewhere Evagrius commends the vision of God ('Blessed are the pure in heart,' after all),¹⁹⁹ and he even notes with approval that 'the Existent Word... at the time of prayer is accustomed to appear'.²⁰⁰ His endorsement of the Word's visitation during prayer sets Evagrius apart from those among his peers, the Desert Fathers, who customarily rejected these

¹⁹⁶ Evagrius, *orat* 115 (Tugwell 1981: p. 22). The relevant discussions can be found at Bunge 1987, pp. 15-16 and Hausherr 1960, pp. 147-149.

¹⁹⁷ E.g., Evagrius, *KG* 1.22 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 25-27); *epp* 39.3-4, 56.4 (Frankenberg 1912: pp. 592, 604) and (Bunge 1986a: pp. 253, 272).

¹⁹⁸ Evagrius, *orat* 66, 67, 114-120 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 13, 21-22); *in Ps* 140.2a'; see Bunge 1999c: pp. 113-115.

¹⁹⁹ Evagrius, *orat* 113-114 (Tugwell 1981: p. 21); cf. *KG* 1.35, 5.26 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 33, 187). See also Regnault 1974.

appearances with no further ado.²⁰¹ From this divergence, it is evident that the difficulty for Evagrius lies not in ‘seeing’ Christ but in ‘*sensibly* seeing’ Christ.²⁰² Thus, to say the least, it is apparent that Evagrius has grave misgivings about the use of the senses. This desperate situation is further compounded by an unmistakable discomfort on Evagrius’ part when faced with the physicality of Christ’s body.²⁰³ If the body is too gross an instrument for the spiritual life, and if the incarnation of the Logos in Christ is a source of profound theological embarrassment, then what possibility can there be for an embodied person to cultivate a relationship with Christ in prayer? The very fact that the problem can be put so acutely suggests that Evagrian theology is characterised by a latent Platonising contempt for the flesh.²⁰⁴ This is surely one of the things Cyriacus had in mind when he prepared his audience for his broadside refutation of Evagrius and company with a reference to Pythagoras and Plato.²⁰⁵

But pressing this claim would be imprudent, since many other passages suggest that Evagrius is taking his inspiration about the worth of the body not from Plato, but Paul. One persistent feature of his works that does not square with the conventional interpretation of Evagrius as a ‘discarnating’ theologian is his perfect willingness to affirm the wonder that God would take on flesh and blood for our sake. As Evagrius unambiguously and surprisingly states in his *Kephalaia Gnostica*, ‘Alone of all bodies,

²⁰⁰ Evagrius, *orat* 52 (Tugwell 1981: p. 11)

²⁰¹ Hausherr 1960, p. 149

²⁰² Hausherr (1960: p. 147) notes that ‘toute la force de la pensée est dans αἰσθητῶς.’ His attempts (pp. 144-146) to reconcile the kataphatic claims of *orat* 113 with the apophatic implication of 114-115 are impressive.

²⁰³ See Evagrius, *KG* 4.27 (the redactor took this to refer to the apparition of the Dove, but S₂ speaks rather of the body of the ‘baptisable’), 4.80, 6.14, 6.79 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 147, 171, 223, 251); *ep fid* 7.11-16, 22-24, 46-47 (Gribomont 1983: pp. 98-100).

²⁰⁴ E.g., Plato, *Phaedo* 67C4-E2

²⁰⁵ Cyril, *u Cyriac* 13 (Schwartz 1939: p. 230.12-13)

Christ is worthy of adoration by us, since He alone has in Himself the Word of God.²⁰⁶

Similarly, in his *Great Letter*, Evagrius writes of God the Son as follows: ‘And thus our Lord is He who appears as a man in our own time and world and measure; but in His own time, and world and kingdom, the man not only appears as God, but He is in truth [God]. Even as in this world there were not two (*viz.*, a God and a man), but one (*viz.*, God with respect to Himself and just the same man with respect to us); thus in His world too, there are not two (*viz.*, God and man), but there is one God who is God with respect to Himself and God the man, because God became man.’²⁰⁷ So God truly became man and had a body – as Evagrius is well aware, for such is the force of his claim: ‘What was unnatural, was that God was born of a woman.’²⁰⁸ When a demon disguised as an Arian clergyman confronts Evagrius and asks whether Christ took flesh from the Virgin Mary, Evagrius displays some knowledge of this debate by expressing surprise that an Arian would ask such a question (he thinks it more characteristic of Manichaeans, Valentinians and Marcionites!), and he goes on to offer a detailed list of events from Scripture that are to be understood in terms of the real, human flesh assumed at the Incarnation.²⁰⁹ Moreover, Evagrius attributes significance to numerous physical events in the life of Christ, the Incarnate Word of God. Of particular importance are His Nativity from the Virgin,²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ Evagrius, *KG* 5.48, to which cf. 2.53 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 197, 83): ⲁⲓⲁⲓⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲛⲓⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲛⲓⲁⲓ ⲛⲉⲩⲉⲛⲓⲁⲓ Speaking of Christ as ‘having the Word of God in Himself’ is characteristic for Evagrius; e.g., *KG* 4.9, 4.18, 6.18, 6.79 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 139, 143, 225, 251); *ep fid* 4.14-15 (Gribomont 1983: p. 94).

²⁰⁷ Evagrius, *ep magna* 61 (Vitestam 1963-1964: p. 25) and (Bunge 1986a: pp. 325-326); cf. *KG* 4.18 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 143). I have profited from Parmentier’s translation of the ‘Letter to Melania’, though I do not endorse his analysis of Evagrius’ theology or the place of this letter in it; see Parmentier 1999.

²⁰⁸ Evagrius, *ep magna* 57 (Vitestam 1963-1964: pp. 22-23) and (Bunge 1986a: p. 324)

²⁰⁹ Palladius, *HL* 38.11, *r.l.* (Butler 1967: 1.131-135)

²¹⁰ Evagrius, *ep magna* 57-63 (Vitestam 1963-1964: pp. 23-26) and (Bunge 1986a: pp. 324-326); *KG* 6.39 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 233)

Baptism,²¹¹ Transfiguration,²¹² Crucifixion and death,²¹³ Descent into Hades,²¹⁴
Resurrection,²¹⁵ and Ascension into Heaven.²¹⁶

Since the significance of these events in Christ's life is realised in the sacraments of the Christian community, it will be convenient to make a brief digression at this point and turn to the Eucharistic presence of Christ in Evagrian theology. This is a pertinent theme because the Eucharistic presence is the chief form of Christ's continued bodily presence in the Christian community, and, as such, what Evagrius says (or does not say) about it may cast light on the place of Christ in Christian prayer.²¹⁷ When we have done this, we will return to the importance of Christ's resurrected body for Evagrius' teaching on prayer. What is immediately striking about Evagrius' references to the Eucharistic Body of Christ is that they are typically indirect. Three chapters from his *To the monks* give a classic example:

The flesh of Christ is the ascetic virtues, and whoever eats them becomes passionless.

The blood of Christ is the contemplation of creation, and whoever drinks it is made wise by it.

The breast of the Lord is the knowledge of God, and whoever rests upon it will be a theologian.²¹⁸

Evagrius was also able to recast Eucharistic imagery for purposes of exhortation, as when he writes, 'Abstain from every corruption, and you partake of the Mystical Supper every day, for thus Christ's body becomes ours.'²¹⁹ Similarly, he enjoins

²¹¹ Evagrius, *KG* 4.27 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 147)

²¹² Evagrius, *KG* 4.23 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 145)

²¹³ Evagrius, *KG* 6.38, 6.40, 6.42 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 233, 235); *paraenesis* 38-39 (Muyldermans 1952: pp. 131-132); *Ad mon* 40 (Greßman 1913: p. 156)

²¹⁴ Evagrius, *KG* 1.57-58, esp. taken with 1.90, 4.80 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 45, 59, 171)

²¹⁵ Evagrius, *KG* 4.24 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 145); *paraenesis* 39 (Muyldermans 1952: p. 132)

²¹⁶ Evagrius, *KG* 4.80 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 171); *Ad mon* 40, 42 (Greßman 1913: p. 156)

²¹⁷ It is perhaps superfluous to mention in this connection that the Eucharistic *synaxis* would have been an intensely prayerful assembly of the believers.

²¹⁸ Evagrius, *Ad mon* 118-120 (Greßman 1913: p. 163)

²¹⁹ Evagrius, *cap par* 120 (PG 79.1260)

almsgiving and humility by urging, ‘Do good to those who are truly poor, and you eat Christ. True humility is to eat the body of Christ.’²²⁰ An account Evagrius offers of the purifications of Lent culminates with a multivalent reference to Christ’s Holy Body that concisely brings together the Paschal, the eschatological, and the Eucharistic strands.²²¹ Similarly, in his scholion on Ps 26.2, Evagrius stipulates that the Psalmist does not refer to the demons eating Christ’s flesh – by definition, this is something they cannot do because of their wickedness – but rather to their eating our flesh.²²² And in a slippery but important chapter of the *Kephalaia Gnostica*, Evagrius recalls the metaphor from Prov 9.2 of Wisdom mingling water and wine in her cup. He identifies the water as ‘the contemplation of bodies’ and the wine as ‘the knowledge of incorporeal things’.²²³ The echo of the Eucharistic cup is admittedly faint here.²²⁴ But elsewhere Evagrius freely identifies Wisdom and the Logos,²²⁵ and his identification of the wine with the knowledge of incorporeal things clarifies another chapter in the *Kephalaia Gnostica* that is otherwise so enigmatic that the Eucharistic metaphor is the only thing intelligible in it. ‘They are not all saints who eat the bread, but who drink the chalice.’²²⁶ In conjunction with the earlier gloss of wine as the knowledge of incorporeal things, this chapter can be taken as reiterating the quintessentially Evagrian claim that the perfection of knowledge

²²⁰ Evagrius, *al sent* 18, 19 (PG 40.1269)

²²¹ Evagrius, *paraenesis* 38 (Muyldermans 1952: p. 131): ‘Lent is a mystical symbol of the purification of our body, in preparation for receiving the holy Body of Christ; for the tomb of the holy Body of Christ is the body of reasonable beings, while His resurrection is the life of the whole world.’

²²² Evagrius, *in Ps* 26.2a’.

²²³ Evagrius, *KG* 5.32: ‘knowledge of incorporeal things’, *المعرفة بالغير*; ‘contemplation of bodies’, *التفكير في الجسد*, (Guillaumont 1958: p. 189); cf. *sch* 103 in Prov 9.2, 107 in Prov 9.5 (Géhin 1987: pp. 202-204).

²²⁴ Those familiar with the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom will think of the warm water added to the chalice immediately before the epiklesis.

²²⁵ E.g., Evagrius, *ep fid* 4.19, 6.1-3 (Gribomont 1983: pp. 94, 96); *in Ps* 131.68’

of God provides the standard of sanctity. Thus, those who imbibe the knowledge of incorporeal things are the saints. In another passage, meanwhile, it is precisely the Eucharistic bread that represents the highest goal of Evagrian asceticism – the vision of God.²²⁷ In these three passages, then, we see Evagrius elaborating on his doctrine of contemplation with reference to the Eucharist.

In his account of Evagrius' life, Palladius alludes to the personal importance Evagrius attached to the Eucharist by stressing that Evagrius received Communion before dying: 'In these [practices] he came to his end, having communed at Epiphany in the church.'²²⁸ This anecdote corroborates the impression that emerges from reading Evagrius' works with close attention to sacramental overtones.²²⁹ Clearly, Evagrius did not fail to take the Eucharist seriously: had he done so, he would not have used Eucharistic language to elucidate other theological topics. It would be absurd for Evagrius to deflate contemplation by referring to it in terms of a Christian ritual of less importance. In fact, for the use of Eucharistic metaphors in these various contexts to be comprehensible at all, we must suppose that Evagrius regarded the Eucharist as more honourable than that to which he compares it. If this is so, almsgiving, humility and contemplation gain from the prestige of the Eucharist; if this is not so, they are diminished by being associated with the Eucharist. Evagrius affirms all this in a rare direct statement about the Eucharist:

²²⁶ Evagrius, *KG* 2.44 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 79): *چه مبدءا حسيما حوہ احبہ حسيما و به حوہ مبدء* The implicit distinction of the spiritually advanced from the spiritually immature is based on St. Paul.

²²⁷ Evagrius, *in Ps* 23.6γ'; see also *in Pss* 36.25κα', 77.25ι', *sch* 103 in Prov 9.2 (Géhin 1987: p. 202)

²²⁸ Palladius, *HL* 38.13 (Bartelink 1974: p. 202) *ἐν αὐτοῖς τελευτᾷ, κοινωνήσας εἰς τὰ Ἐπιφάνια εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.*

²²⁹ By examining the importance of baptism for Evagrian theology, Bunge (1999b) has shown the fruitfulness of this procedure.

‘Whoever eats me,’ He says, ‘will live through me’ [Jn 6.57]. For we eat His body and drink His blood, becoming communicants through the incarnation and sensible life of the Word and Wisdom. For ‘flesh and blood’ He has called every aspect of His mystical coming and He has disclosed His teaching, consisting of practical, natural and theological knowledge, by which the soul is nourished and prepared for the contemplation of ultimate reality. This is likely what is meant by this passage.²³⁰

As Fr. Gabriel Bunge has observed, we find the same interpretation of ‘flesh and blood’ in the analogous context of Evagrius’ scholion on Psalm 67.24 (‘That thy foot may be dipped in blood, thy dogs’ tongues [reddened] by the same blood of thine enemies’): ‘The foot is Christ’s, the man [born] from Mary, which through sufferings is bathed in blood, which blood the enemies call us to drink – we who always wish to be dogs and never come to the knowledge of the truth. For they know that those who eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood remain in Him, and He in them.’²³¹

Evagrius’ position differs remarkably from the one that Shenouda attacked so heatedly attacked for its deficient Eucharistic Christology.²³² Shenouda chiefly faulted his opponents for their relegation of the Eucharist to the realm of the purely symbolic. ‘But some [claim] that the bread and the chalice are not the body and blood of Christ, but

²³⁰ Evagrius, *ep fid* 4.16-23 (Gribomont 1983: p. 94). Cf. Bunge 1986a: p. 383 n. 59: ‘In Ps 67,24 [P 24] deutet Evagrius in analogem Kontext (die wahre Menschheit Christi) “Fleisch und Blut” im selben Sinn. Die Dämonen hindern uns daran, sie zu essen und zu trinken, um uns von der Erkenntnis der Wahrheit fernzuhalten. Evagrius “spiritualisiert” hier die Eucharistie keineswegs, sondern sucht ihren tiefsten Sinn auf: vollkommene Gemeinschaft mit Gott. Vgl. in diesem Sinn auch Gregor von Nazianz, *Oratio* 38, 4. – Mit ἐπιδημία bezeichnet Evagrius (wie andere Väter) stets die *Inkarnatoin*, und zwar als ein “Kommen” und damit *Gegenwärtigsein* des Logos in der Menschenwelt, vgl. in Ps 44, 3 [P 3(2)]; 107, 10 [R 10(2)]; KG VI, 14 u. ö. Daher die altertümliche Wendung “Christus, der den Logos in sich hat”.’

²³¹ Evagrius, in Ps 67.24ιδ: Ποῦς Χριστοῦ, ὁ ἐκ Μαρίας ἄνθρωπος, ὅστις διὰ τοῦ πάθους ἐβάφη τῷ αἵματι· ὅπερ αἷμα κωλύουσιν ἡμᾶς οἱ ἐχθροὶ πίνειν, κύνας ἡμᾶς αἰεὶ βουλόμενοι εἶναι, καὶ μηδέποτε εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας ἐλθεῖν. Οἶδασιν γὰρ ὅτι οἱ τρώγοντες τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὰς σάρκας καὶ πίνοντες αὐτοῦ τὸ αἷμα ἐν αὐτῷ μένουσιν, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν αὐτοῖς. Contrast to this the ‘spiritualized and allegorized’ teaching Clark (1992: pp. 65-66) foists on Evagrius. Clark’s reference (p. 65 fn. 121) to Bunge, *Das Geistgebet*, 40 for further ‘references to Evagrius’s spiritualized interpretation of “bread”’ is in error. Fr. Gabriel’s perspective, as we have seen, is stridently opposed to this: ‘Evagrius “spiritualisiert” hier die Eucharistie keineswegs, sondern sucht ihren tiefsten Sinn auf: vollkommene Gemeinschaft mit Gott’ (emphasis added).

²³² See Shenouda, *c Orig* (Orlandi 1985: esp. 0348-55, 0369-74, 0383); see also (Lies 1978). The original title to this work is lost, but the content has understandably suggested to its editor that Shenouda was writing against Origenists. I am not competent to offer a judgment on the accuracy of this title. In any

only a symbol. I faint just from saying it. Woe is me! I tremble on account of this godlessness.²³³ All the more scandalous for Shenouda is the very notion that priests would hold this belief, too. ‘There are also those accursed ones who receive it in themselves faithlessly, and all the more so he who confesses it with the mouth, as he gives it to the others, “σῶμα Χριστοῦ, αἷμα Χριστοῦ,” but denies that it is in truth His Body and His Blood.’²³⁴ Of course, this censure would not have been technically applicable to Evagrius the deacon – even if he were guilty of minimising the sacrament in the way Shenouda describes. But this is an irrelevant consideration since it can be seen that he is in fact not guilty of doing so.

In the first place, Evagrius’ ability to create metaphoric links between the Eucharist and various Christian actions in no way impugns the reality of Christ’s presence in the bread and wine. We can thus offer this basically negative response to Shenouda’s objection – Evagrius need not be committed to an exclusively symbolic interpretation of the Eucharist just because he recognises that the Eucharist has tremendous potential for figures of speech. There is no necessary connection between recognising the value of the Eucharist as a symbol – as Evagrius clearly does²³⁵ – and restricting the significance of the Eucharist to the purely symbolic.²³⁶ Although it is

case, what Shenouda denounces so neatly fits our expectations of what an Origenist ought to say, that it can be profitably contrasted to Evagrius’ teaching.

²³³ Shenouda, *c Orig* (Orlandi 1985: 0348): ῥοικε δε οκ ξε ποεικ αγω προτηριοκ πσωμα ακ πε μπεχριστος αγω περσκοq αλλα οντυπος μματε πε. αιβωλ εβωλ ειχω κκαι. οτοι και αιωτορτρ εκ τμκτατκοYTE.

²³⁴ Shenouda, *c Orig* (Orlandi 1985: 0374): σεεχογορτ δε οκ κβι κετχι εβωλ κζητq ρκ ογμκταπιστος. μαλλοκ δε πετρομολογει μμοq ρκ τεqταπρο. eqτ κρεκκοογε ξε σωμα ΧριστοY αιμα ΧριστοY εqαρκα μμοq ξε περσωμα ακ πε. αγω περσκοq αληθωc.

²³⁵ At *sch* 13 in Eccl 2.25 (Géhin 1993: p. 78), Evagrius explicitly calls Christ’s flesh and blood ‘symbols’.

²³⁶ Cf. the Eucharist in the poetry of St John of the Cross; see *Poesías* 1.5, and esp. 2.11, 2.13 (Ruano de la Iglesia 1982: pp. 11-13):

Aquesta eterna fonte está escondida
en este vivo pan por darnos vida,
aunque es de noche.

often convenient to besmirch one's opponents by degrading their use of typology to the purely symbolic, this is a habit best avoided by scholars, who must demand evidence of such a restricted understanding rather than taking it for granted.²³⁷ But we can go further and offer a positive response as well, on the basis of other passages in Evagrius' writings where he ascribes special properties to the Body of Christ. Taken with the other evidence, these passages strongly suggest that Evagrius had at his disposal a way of construing the Body of Christ that could be used to defend a robust doctrine of the Eucharistic Body and Blood of Christ. This shows that Shenouda's criticism does not correspond to Evagrius' teaching. By severing the internal connections that will be noted between the Eucharist and the Body of Christ in Evagrius' writings, Shenouda's objection could only apply to a radically truncated and therefore seriously distorted variant of Evagrian theology. This can be appreciated by considering the evidence Evagrius provides for his understanding of the Body of Christ.

- The unique and venerable Body of Christ

Two Gospel sequences in particular stand out in Evagrius' writings as evidence for the unique properties of Christ's body: the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, and the

[...]

Aquesta viva fuente que deseo,
 en este pan de vida yo la veo,
 aunque es de noche.

For John's devotion to the Eucharist, see e.g. *Subida del Monte Carmelo* 3.25.8 and *Noche Oscura* 1.4.2, 1.6.5 (pp. 281, 327, 332). Clearly, a theologian who takes the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist with the utmost seriousness can be simultaneously keenly sensitive to the poetic value of Eucharistic imagery.

²³⁷ It is a recurrent technique in debates about the Eucharist to accuse opponents who take recourse to Eucharistic symbolism as having thereby broken with a commitment to the reality of Christ's Eucharistic presence (thus, the iconodules against the iconoclasts, the debates reflected in the *Libri Carolini*, and the discussion of this topic during the Reform).

because Christ's body is first transfigured, then resurrected, and in both instances transformed by the Power of God.

Evagrius' unusual positive regard for Christ's body must not be taken to suggest that any and every apparition of Christ is trustworthy, for the potential of demonic delusion exists here, too. However, the recurrent, pious references made to the Body of Christ preclude any wholesale rejection of the bodily order. Indeed, so far from obstructing spiritual development, Christ's body promotes it. Evagrius does not resist Christ's holy embodiment, but instead calls it 'worthy of adoration'.²⁴² Whether this claim is consistent with Evagrius' general trend of theological *apophasis* is an important question. But before we address this question, we will need to revisit Evagrius' statements about the resurrected state. Not only does Evagrius closely link his teaching about the general resurrection to Christ's body,²⁴³ but he also makes claims that fly in the face of conventional wisdom about Evagrian theology. So these claims must be assessed before any legitimate attempt at judging Evagrius' evident breach of apophatic propriety can be made.

The *Kephalaia Gnostica* provides abundant evidence for attributing to Evagrius a radically immaterial or indeed 'anti-material' understanding of salvation. This is most apparent where he appears to assert a discarnate state of perfection. 'If the human body is a part of this world and "the form of this world is passing away", it is evident that the form of the body shall also pass away.'²⁴⁴ Elsewhere, he speaks of the 'dissolution of the

ἦν ἡ σὰρξ τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

²⁴² Evagrius, *KG* 5.48 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 197): *ἐν τῷ σώματι*; see also in *Pss* 98.5β, 131.7ε.

²⁴³ See Evagrius, *KG* 1.90, 4.41, 6.34, 6.79 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 59, 155, 231, 251); *Ad uirg* 54, *r.l.* (see fn. 280-281, below). Cf. the testimony of Amma Theodora, whose teaching is like Evagrius' own in a great many respects: *apoph* Theodora 10 = S 3, (Guy 1962: p. 23).

²⁴⁴ Evagrius, *KG* 1.26 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 29); 1 Cor 7.31

body' that goes along with the knowledge of the *logoi*.²⁴⁵ There is an even more trenchant statement (mitigated considerably by the later Syriac redactor) at KG 2.77: 'It is not the transformation of bodies that the last judgement shows, but it makes known their abolition.'²⁴⁶ Related to this, Evagrius explicitly says that the intellect, not the body, is what makes for the human likeness to God.²⁴⁷ This in turn recalls the principle of Evagrius' protology that bodies are an adjunct, the 'consequence' – if one could speak of atemporal events following one another²⁴⁸ – of the cooling of the ardour of some intellects.²⁴⁹ So it would appear that Evagrius meant us to understand that the body is a hindrance to participation in the fullness of Christian life,²⁵⁰ and on this basis that the purpose of Christianity in large measure is to cut off the body and its distractions.²⁵¹ This is the gist of the conventional reading of Evagrius.

But there are numerous passages in the *Kephalaia Gnostica* and also in the *Great Letter* that contradict this reading. They indicate that the frame of reference Evagrius used was not Platonic but rather Pauline. What is characteristically Pauline in these passages is Evagrius' somewhat reticent claim that, in the resurrected state, our bodies will undergo a transformation that is beyond our understanding.²⁵² Frequently these passages explicitly cite St Paul, as at KG 2.59, where Evagrius writes, "The righteous

²⁴⁵ Evagrius, *KG* 2.17: ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ; see also 3.66, 3.68 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 67, 125)

²⁴⁶ Evagrius, *KG* 2.77: ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ. Cf. 3.40 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 91, 113)

²⁴⁷ Evagrius, *KG* 3.32, 3.53 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 111, 119)

²⁴⁸ On *KG* 3.20, 3.45, see Bunge 1999b; cf. *KG* 6.9 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 105, 115, 221).

²⁴⁹ Evagrius, *KG* 3.28-30; cf. 3.38, 3.54 (cosmological argument: bodies are appropriate to the degree of fallenness); 3.20, 3.45 (dual creation), (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 109-111; 113, 119; 105, 115). The gist of his teaching is stated very succinctly at *ep mag* 26 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 618) and (Bunge 1986a: p. 311).

²⁵⁰ Evagrius, *KG* 5.2 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 177): the catechumens (lit., 'hearers': ܡܠܟܐ) of the intelligible Church are separated from it by location and body.

²⁵¹ Evagrius, *KG* 5.28 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 187)

²⁵² See esp. 1 Cor 15.35-49. I am inclined to interpret the rather mysterious *KG* 1.24 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 27) in terms of this passage.

died.²⁵⁹ So it is implausible to regard Evagrius' as an *ad hoc* profession designed to assuage critics: even in his valorisation of the intellect, where he could most naturally repudiate the body, Evagrius explicitly refuses to glorify the intellect at the expense of the body. He stipulates that 'it is not because the intellect is incorporeal that it is the likeness of God, but because it can receive Him.'²⁶⁰ Furthermore, though obviously the body can be used for evil, the body *eo ipso* is not evil.²⁶¹ Likewise, whether or not the body is spiritual depends upon the practice of virtue.²⁶²

This emphasis on the body that is by its nature good but has ambivalent potential reminds us that for Evagrius the proper ordering of creation demands that body be subservient to intellect, which must in turn be subservient to God. The properly ordered relationship of body, soul and intellect must be kept in mind when we read in the Great Letter that the separation of the human into body, soul and intellect will cease and the body and soul will become intellect.²⁶³ At first glance, this suggests that the body and soul will cease to exist. But it is altogether unlikely that this is what Evagrius meant, since he explicitly parallels this 'unification' of the human to the unity of the Trinity.²⁶⁴ The three elements of the human correspond to the Three Persons of the Godhead.²⁶⁵ Since Evagrius vehemently denies that the Three Persons will be absorbed into an undifferentiated Divinity,²⁶⁶ we can feasibly infer that neither will the three elements be

²⁵⁹ Origen, *prin* 2.10.1-3 (Crouzel 1978-1984: 1.374-382)

²⁶⁰ Evagrius, *KG* 6.73 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 247): ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ σώματος ὡς τὸ σκεῦος τοῦ σώματος, οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ σώματος, ἀλλὰ τὸ σκεῦος τοῦ σώματος.

²⁶¹ Cf. Evagrius, *KG* 3.75 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 129)

²⁶² Evagrius, *KG* 3.25 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 107)

²⁶³ Evagrius, *ep mag* 22-32 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 616-618) and (Bunge 1986a: pp. 310-315)

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 22-24 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 616) and (Bunge 1986a: pp. 310-311)

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 23 (Frankenberg 1912: p. 616) and (Bunge 1986a: p. 310)

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

assimilated into a homogeneous intellect.²⁶⁷ We find an indication of what the proper relationship between these elements will be like when Evagrius describes the soul's transfiguring of the body.²⁶⁸ This is strengthened by the following assertion from the *Kephalaia Gnostica*: 'When the intellects have received the contemplation that concerns them, then too all bodily nature will be elevated and thus the contemplation that concerns it will become immaterial.'²⁶⁹ It is significant that Evagrius does not say that the body will become immaterial, but rather that the contemplation of bodily nature will become immaterial. We will explicate this curious but precise claim in connection with Christ's 'adorable' body shortly, but first it remains to be seen whether we can find any harmony in the texts discussed thus far.

We have found in the *Kephalaia Gnostica* a wealth of passages that either defend the goodness of the body or else endorse the teaching that the resurrection will be (in some form) bodily. These are simply unintelligible on the assumption that Evagrius was appealing to a philosophically informed dualistic prejudice to bolster his rejection of the material order. So we should pose the question whether it is possible to reinterpret the seemingly discarnate claims noted above in terms of an Evagrian exegesis of St Paul. Returning to those claims, we find that the paradigm statement of 'rejecting' the body hinges on a Pauline quotation: 'If the human body is a part of this world and "the form of this world is passing away", it is evident that the form of the body shall also pass away.'²⁷⁰ In light of Evagrius' affirmation of the resurrected body, the emphasis of this

²⁶⁷ Parmentier (1999: p. 297) thinks that the absence of the intellect from this discussion indicates that 'Evagrius wants to concentrate on the body-soul fallen humanity there [sc., in sections 7-13] which must be overcome and return to the mind state'. This interpretation is plausible, but I am not convinced – chiefly on the basis of the parallel adduced above, but see also *KG* 2.56 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 83).

²⁶⁸ Evagrius, *ep mag* 47-49 (Vitestam 1963-1964: pp. 17-18) and (Bunge 1986a: pp. 320-321)

²⁶⁹ Evagrius, *KG* 2.62; cf. 6.57 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 85, 241)

²⁷⁰ Evagrius, *KG* 1.26 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 29)

quotation now falls on the term ‘form’ rather than the term ‘body’, since it is not the body that passes away but the form of the present body that passes away. On the strength of this interpretation, the passages in which he speaks of the ‘dissolution’ or ‘corruption’ of the body can be read likewise as referring to the present body.²⁷¹ When Evagrius says that after the ‘last trumpet’ the wicked bodies will be no more, this is immediately after distinguishing wicked bodies from good bodies.²⁷² The failure here to lump together wicked and good bodies under the inevitability of a common annihilation is telling. Likewise, when Evagrius talks of the ‘spiritual sword’ that separates body from soul, there is no indication whatsoever that he has in mind a denial of bodily resurrection.²⁷³ These passages, then, do not preclude the possibility of a resurrected body.

This leaves only the strong denial that the last judgement reveals the transformation of bodies.²⁷⁴ Here, it will be recalled, Evagrius says that the last judgement instead reveals the abolition of bodies. In light of the ample evidence that Evagrius elsewhere affirms the transformation of the body on multiple occasions, this explicit denial is confusing because, simply put, this statement appears to be contradicted by numerous other statements he made. But what sets this passage apart is its reference to the last judgement. We should take this reference as a cue to shift from the Pauline works and consult Revelation instead. There we read that the judgement is coupled with the ‘passing away’ of the first heaven and the first earth, which will presumably include all bodies.²⁷⁵ The passing away of the first creation is widely attested in Scripture, but it

²⁷¹ Evagrius, *KG* 2.17: *فسيحة, فسيحة* (‘dissolution of the body’); 3.66, 3.68: *فساد, فساد* (‘corruption of the body’), (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 67, 125)

²⁷² Evagrius, *KG* 3.40 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 113); 1 Cor 15.52.

²⁷³ Evagrius, *KG* 5.28 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 187); Heb 4.12, Rev 1.16, 2.12.

²⁷⁴ Evagrius, *KG* 2.77 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 91); see fn. 246.

²⁷⁵ Rev 20.11-21.1. The verb is *ἀπὸλθον*, which like the English ‘to pass away’ often connotes death.

is not a Pauline theme.²⁷⁶ The corollary of this destruction – the new creation – is, however, happily compatible with Paul's account of God assigning new bodies at the resurrection.²⁷⁷ Since, then, Evagrius' claim that at the last judgement bodies will be destroyed is made in a separate frame of reference than his claims that bodies will be changed, there is no formal contradiction here. It is therefore desirable to group the claim found here about the abolition of the body with the other claims about the 'dissolution' and 'corruption' of the body. These, as we have seen, must be understood with reference to the present body and not as a repudiation of the resurrected body. So in spite of the seeming contradiction between this passage and others, it appears that Evagrius has simply resorted to a different, but not incommensurable, set of Scriptural images to make his point; and indeed that this point is of a piece with what we have seen so far.

On this reading of the evidence, what emerges is an intricate but consistent endorsement by Evagrius of bodily resurrection. But, as with St Paul and the Holy Scripture in general, Evagrius regularly qualifies this endorsement in such a way as to indicate that the resurrected body will be significantly unlike the present body.²⁷⁸ The Holy Body of Christ, first in the Transfiguration, then in the Resurrection, affords a precious glimpse of what the resurrected body will be like.²⁷⁹ Evagrius makes the point in a little creed he inserts in his work *To a virgin*:

I have seen men corrupting virgins with heretical teachings and making their virginity vain; so you, O Daughter, attend unto the decrees of the church of the Lord, and let nothing from without oppose you. God established heaven and earth and oversees all things and delights in them. There is no angel incapable of evil and no demon wicked by nature, for God made both with free will.²⁸⁰ Just as a person consists in

²⁷⁶ E.g., Ps. 102.25-26 (there is, alas, no Evagrian commentary on this passage); Mt. 5.18, 24.35; 2 Pt. 3.10-13

²⁷⁷ Is. 65.17-25, 66.22; 2 Pt. 3.13; Rev. 21.1, 5 (new creation); 1 Cor. 15.38, 42-44 (new bodies).

²⁷⁸ Cf. Guillaumont 1962, pp. 213-217

²⁷⁹ Evagrius, *KG* 4.41, cf. 4.24 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 155, 145)

²⁸⁰ My translation is deliberately ambiguous, since there is a difference between the Latin and Syriac

knowledge simultaneously possible and problematic.²⁸⁵ A great deal of what Evagrius writes on the relationship of the body to knowledge frankly trivialises the role played by the body: 'It is not the bodies of spiritual powers, but of souls only, which by their nature are nourished by the world that they live in.'²⁸⁶ Other passages make the relationship appear very tenuous: 'Temporal is the movement of the corporeal, but non-temporal the transformation of the incorporeal.'²⁸⁷ Evagrius also likens the body to the intellect's house, so that the senses are windows through which the intellect sees sensible things.²⁸⁸ This analogy anticipates his claims that the intellect has no need of the body in order to contemplate reality.²⁸⁹ Taking a step further, he claims that the body no less than distance separates the catechumens from the intelligible church.²⁹⁰ It is precisely in this context that Evagrius is wont to write of the 'naked' intellect.²⁹¹ The claim that the body is detached from the activity of the intellect undergirds Evagrius' ability to contrast the body to knowledge.²⁹² It also guarantees his assertion that the body is to inferior knowledge what the intellect is to contemplation, namely the element of the human responsible for the respective functions.²⁹³

But this is only part of the story. The linkage of body and knowledge is given an unmistakable positive emphasis in the following chapter: 'Whoever draws near to knowledge approaches the virtuous transformation of the body; but whoever goes to

²⁸⁵ Cf. Evagrius, *ep fid* 2.33-38 (Gribomont 1983: p. 88)

²⁸⁶ Evagrius, *KG* 2.82 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 93)

²⁸⁷ Evagrius, *KG* 2.87 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 95)

²⁸⁸ Evagrius, *KG* 4.68 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 167)

²⁸⁹ Evagrius, *KG* 4.70 (= *in Ps* 141.8ε), 5.12, 4.86, 5.14 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 173, 181, 183)

²⁹⁰ Evagrius, *KG* 5.2 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 177)

²⁹¹ Evagrius, *KG* 3.17, 3. 19 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 105)

²⁹² Evagrius, *KG* 4.84 (Guillaumont 1958: p. 173)

²⁹³ Evagrius, *KG* 3.10-13, 3.15, 3.21 (Guillaumont 1958: pp. 101-103, 105)

separates them.³⁰² An attentive reading of his works indicates that he presents prayer and psalmody as mutually supportive and interdependent. Thus, as Bunge perceptively notes, Evagrius designates contemplation as doxology, natural knowledge as psalmody and (perhaps with an eye to Our Lord's paradoxical teaching that the first shall be last) ascetic practice as exaltation.³⁰³ Without minimising the differences between contemplation, natural knowledge and ascetic practice, it is critical to appreciate that each of them informs the other two. The distinction of these aspects of the Christian life is in effect rather fluid, with one giving way imperceptibly to the next. So it would be a mistake to think of them as antithetical or rigidly compartmentalised. We find the same dynamic at work in the Christian practices of psalmody and prayer.

Similar, too, is Evagrius' distinction of Christology from Triadology. Indeed, just as Evagrius links prayer to the Holy Trinity, he also links psalmody to Christ. The complexity of Christ as God Incarnate finds its appropriate counterpart in the complexity of the Psalms. In His role as Creator, Christ reveals Himself in the ordered dispensation of the cosmos as the manifold Wisdom of God, while the Psalms attest to the divine imprint of the creation and thereby urge and direct natural contemplation.³⁰⁴ Meanwhile the simplicity of prayer corresponds to the simplicity of the Holy Trinity, which is the focal point of contemplation. Now, we have seen that Evagrius tacitly co-ordinates the interaction of prayer and psalmody within the spiritual life. It is plausible to suppose that

³⁰² Bunge 1987, p. 27: 'Psalm und Gebet, so betrachtet, stehen keineswegs in einem Gegensatz, und es handelt sich nicht darum, zwischen beiden zu wählen! Sie sind vielmehr, ganz wie die sich in ihnen widerspiegelnde indirekte und direkte Gotteserkenntnis, unlösbar miteinander verbunden.'

³⁰³ Ibid., p. 27, referring to *KG* 1.28.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 19: 'Der Psalm ist ihm vor allem "geistgewirkte Belehrung" über das geheimnisvolle Wirken Gottes. In ihm spiegelt sich die "mannigfaltige Weisheit" des schöpferischen Gott-Logos wider, deren verborgene "Sinngehalte" allein der von den verfremdenden Leidenschaften gereinigte Intellekt zu erkennen vermag. Diese geistgewirkte Erkenntnis bringt den Intellekt wie die zehnsaitige Harfe Davids, das Psalterion, zum Erklingen, und jene Melodie, die ihm dann erströmt, ist Hymnus-Gebet.'

this practical co-ordination parallels a theological co-ordination. To be a bit more specific, our understanding of the delicate balance Evagrius accomplished in relating psalmody to prayer can be applied very fruitfully to the original question to which we have addressed ourselves in this section.

Now, Evagrius' endorsement of anoetic prayer has a great danger that it can easily be seriously misunderstood. If thoughts, images and language are incapable of accurate application to God and are therefore to be rejected, Christian theology is called into question at its most basic level – indeed, no speech about God (which Evagrius was keenly aware is exactly what theology is)³⁰⁵ would be at all possible. However, the advent of Christ totally altered what would otherwise be a hopeless situation.³⁰⁶ Since we have noted that Evagrius regarded the body of Christ, even before His resurrection, as being something quite apart, we can see how naturally Evagrius could deem Christ's incarnation as a new departure for theological enterprise. The catalytic effect of Christ's exceptional body should not be underestimated. The revolutionary fact that God lived a human life means nothing less than the vindication (through purification) of human terms of reference to God.³⁰⁷ Certainly, human terms cannot be applied to God promiscuously, as the particularity of Christ's life has insured. But if Christ's teachings and the Christian

³⁰⁵ Cf. Evagrius, *sch* 35 in Eccl 5.12 (Géhin 1993: p. 116), where *θεολογεῖν* has the sense of 'speaking about God'; *gnos* 27 (Guillaumont 1989: p. 132).

³⁰⁶ Cf. Bunge 1987 pp. 21-22: 'Die logische Folge dieser radikalen Ablehnung jeglicher sinnlichen Gottesvorstellung müßte, so könnte man schließen, ein Sprechen von Gott allein in abstraktion philosophischen Begriffen sein. Das Gegenteil ist indessen der Fall! Evagrius ist sich der Begrenztheit auch der abstrakten Sprache nur zu bewußt und steht jedem unbedachten "Theologisieren" reserviert gegenüber. Stattdessen spricht er, wie die zitierten Texte lehren, von dem Verhältnis zwischen Gott und Geschöpf fast ausschließlich *in Bildern*, die ihm die Schrift in so reicher Fülle anbietet. [...] Das Bild, das *Symbol*, wie er selbst sagt, *definiert*, d.h. begrenzt ja im Unterschied zum abstrakten Begriff die gemeinte Wirklichkeit nicht, es läßt sie vielmehr allein dem geistigen Auge *aufscheinen*, gibt der Epiphanie des Göttlichen den ihm gebührenden unumgrenzten Raum zu freier Selbstmitteilung.'

³⁰⁷ Cf. Evagrius, *in Ps* 145.8β'. Because the Logos is the Lord of Creation, this scholia is thoroughly Christological.

teachings about Christ have precluded some interpretations of God, they have certainly motivated others.

In terms of Evagrian theology, what this points up is that even if Evagrius does not explicitly refer to a distinction like the classical Byzantine one between apophatic and kataphatic theology, he unmistakably demonstrates something very much like it in practice. We are able to observe this technique at work if we consider his teaching about Christ and psalmody as exemplary of kataphatic theology and his teaching about the Trinity and prayer as exemplary of apophatic theology. This is hardly a simple case of denying some propositions and asserting other, but rather ‘saying and unsaying to positive effect’.³⁰⁸ Just as Evagrius’ teachings about psalmody reinforce his teachings about prayer without disrupting them, so too his teaching about Christ reinforces without disrupting his teaching about the Holy Trinity.³⁰⁹ In both cases, the specificity of the former provides the criteria for the latter, though all the while direct experience is ultimately preferred to synthetic statements.³¹⁰ With reference to the special body of Christ, Evagrius in effect apophatically denies mundane, material understanding so that he can kataphatically affirm eschatological, intelligible understanding – not just of Christ, but (because of Christ) of absolutely everything. We must take care to note, however, that this does not imply a rejection of the material order and it certainly does not imply a diminution of understanding. Rather, both are to be transformed, indeed, transfigured, by

³⁰⁸ Ware 1995, p. 14

³⁰⁹ It is entirely consonant with this aspect of his thought when Palladius relates Evagrius’ condemnation of the three Christologically heretical demons, by saying, ‘For I see that you three in company have denied the full mystery of the Holy Trinity’; *HL* 38.11, *r.l.* (Butler 1967: 1.134-135). Cf. *ad mon* 134, (Greßman 1913: p. 164).

³¹⁰ Here, Fr Dumitru Stăniloae’s observation (1980: p. 73) on the relationship of apophatic and kataphatic theology is most helpful: ‘Our words and thoughts of God are both kataphatic and apophatic, that is, they say something and at the same time they suggest the ineffable. If we remain enclosed within our formulae they become idols; if we reject any and every formula we drown in the undefined chaos of that ocean.’

the encounter with Christ in ascetic practice, prayer, the sacramental life, and contemplation.

On this basis, it is plain to see that Evagrius' claims about Christ's body are not consistent at all with his apophatic theology. Rather, they are fundamental to his kataphatic theology, which is an equally important mode of theology for Evagrius, but one that is strictly distinct from his apophatic theology. And it is under the general heading of apophatic theology that Evagrius preferred to articulate his account of prayer. This has the somewhat surprising consequence of 'de-centring' Christ from Christian prayer. According to Evagrius, prayer is ultimately not so much *directed to Christ* as it is *accomplished in Christ*.³¹¹ There is no hint that this shift in emphasis indicates a lessening of Christ's divinity, which is for Evagrius absolutely out of the question.³¹² Indeed, Evagrius acknowledges that Christ is the perfect 'image of the Father' and moreover the 'Face of God'.³¹³ Because Christ points us to the Father rather than to Himself alone, Christ is not the focus of Christian prayer. But inasmuch as it is Christ

³¹¹ There are exceptions. Fr Bunge (1986c: p. 207 fn. 32) cites *prak* 54, *Ad uirg* 5, and *cog* 34 ('contains a beautiful example of the christological *relecture* of the Psalms'). One might also add *in Ps* 24.58: Evagrius recommends that verse ('Lead me in Thy truth and teach me, for Thou art God my Saviour') as being 'useful for prayer'. 'The Saviour' clearly means Christ; cf., *sch* 23 in Eccl 4.1, *sch* 35 in Eccl 5.1-2, et al. (Géhin 1993: pp. 96, 116-118). And yet, the first (Guillaumont 1971: 2.626) refers to 'invoking Christ in vigils' (τὸν Χριστὸν ἐν ἀγρυπνίαις ἐπικαλούμενοι) – but not 'praying to Christ', *pace* Bamberger 1970, p. 31. The second (Greßman 1913: p. 146) pairs the scriptural injunction 'pray without ceasing' with the exhortation, 'Remember Christ who made you' (καὶ μέμνησο Χριστοῦ τοῦ γεννήσαντός σε) – but again, this is not strictly enjoining prayer to Christ. The third passage (Géhin 1998: p. 272.19-22), however, is incontrovertible: 'Lord, Christ, the power of my salvation, incline your ear to me, hasten to save me, become for me a Saviour God and a place of refuge to save me' («Κύριε», Χριστέ, «δύναμις τῆς σωτηρίας μου», «κλῖνον πρὸς με τὸ οὖς σου, τάχυνον τοῦ ἐξελέσθαι με, γενοῦ μοι εἰς Θεὸν ὑπερασπιστὴν καὶ εἰς τόπον καταφυγῆς τοῦ σῶσαί με»). Cf. Pss 139.8, 30.3). Obviously, Evagrius recognises the importance of Christ for Christian prayer: he even miraculously opened a locked door by invoking Christ while making the sign of the cross (see Palladius, *HL* 38.12 (Bartelink 1974: p. 200))! But as Fr Gabriel himself suggests, these prayers are petitionary. They are indubitably necessary, but unmistakably a far cry from the contemplative heights of prayer as described by Evagrius.

³¹² In this connection, we should recall that Evagrius' *Ep fid* is primarily a Christological apology that defends Christ's divinity against Arian objections.

³¹³ Cf. 2 Cor. 4.6; Evagrius, *in Pss* 16.2α', 23.6γ', 29.8ζ', 68.29 ιζ', 79.8δ', *orat* 52, 55, 59, 113 (Tugwell 1981: pp. 11-12, 21); see also Bunge 1999c, pp. 121-123.

who teaches us how and what to pray,³¹⁴ we might say that Christ provides the ambient in which Christian prayer makes sense.

³¹⁴ Evagrius, *exp orat dom* (de Lagarde 1886: p. 13); see Bunge 1987, pp. 44-62: 'Das "Herrengebet"'.

THEOLOGY AND PRAYER ACCORDING TO CASSIAN

In the last chapter, we noted that a number of scholars have called attention to the differences between Cassian's doctrine of prayer and that of his master, Evagrius. No one could deny that there is a great difference between the two. This is evident from the fact that Cassian dwells on emotional descriptions of the experience of prayer, whereas Evagrius' primary focus is the theological foundation of prayer. But the important question is this: what do we make of this difference? In the present chapter, I will argue that a comparison of the two reveals no substantial disagreement – and that in fact it reveals a profound commitment to advancing a shared, coherent account of prayer. In the previous chapter, we have seen that Evagrius' writings abundantly attest to fiery prayer, tears and joy – all things which, when found in Cassian, have been taken as evidence that he reached beyond the Evagrian tradition. There is no *prima facie* reason for looking further for exotic sources. But this does not mean that Cassian simply retold what he had learnt, while giving added emphasis to the emotional component of that teaching. As we will see, Cassian developed Evagrius' teaching significantly. To anticipate my conclusion, Cassian's account of prayer differs from Evagrius' because, in it, he makes Christology and Pneumatology much more prominent than Evagrius had done.

- The practical basis of Cassian's teaching on prayer

Cassian only explains what prayer is after he extensively teaches how to pray.¹ His first discussion of prayer begins with an almost furtive remark: ‘...meanwhile we might at least make a preliminary sketch of some lineaments of prayer, by which chiefly those who dwell in cœnobia will be able to be somewhat informed.’² But the self-abasement ought not mislead us. It veils a pedagogical decision of great importance.³ While he never offers an account of his pedagogy, the regularity of his style justifies the inference: We learn by doing, we learn by observing the consequences of our actions. Guidance is of enormous importance for the process, since a knowledgeable guide facilitates this process. Such a guide also ensures continuity with and fidelity to the tradition of the Ancients – something of obvious and great significance to Cassian’s thinking. This experiential foundation of Cassian’s teaching, like that of all the Desert Fathers (even when it is not immediately evident to us), is basic to understanding that teaching. Failure to appreciate that can only end in misunderstanding. So after considering what Cassian teaches about how to pray, we will examine the functions of prayer. This will lead us to Cassian’s statements about what prayer is. Once we have examined Cassian’s position, we will be able to understand how prayer relates to other aspects of the Christian life.

Cassian provides a relatively huge amount of information about how the monks at Scetis prayed.⁴ Communal prayer also provides the rhythm for his *Conferences*, since

¹ Cassian, *inst* 2.1, 9.1. Cassian sets out the old traditions of the East, deferring questions of their character and how to ‘pray without ceasing’ till *conl* pref. 1.5; 9-10; 23.5.9.

² Cassian, *inst* 2.9.2: ‘saltim quasdam tantisper orationum lineas praesignemus, quibus hi uel maxime, qui in coenobiis commorantur, ualeant aliquatenus informari.’

³ Cf. (Stewart 1998), pp. 37-39

⁴ Scholars have turned to Cassian’s writings to supplement previous gaps in our knowledge of Egyptian monasticism in general; e.g., (Van der Mensbrugghe 1957). The overextension of Cassian’s witness has been corrected by recent scholarship on the Pachomian establishments. (Guy 1966); (Veilleux 1968), pp. 146-154 (Cassian’s accuracy), 334-339 (the Angelic Rule); (Stewart 1998), p. 140. We must remember,

many of them occurs immediately before or after prayer.⁵ He devotes Book Two of his *Institutes* to the rule of evening prayers, and Book Three to the rule of daily prayers. Throughout both books he constantly insists that the traditions of the elders provide prescriptive norms: ‘per successiones ac traditiones maiorum’, as he puts it.⁶ For the sources of this tradition, Cassian peers past the first desert fathers to the earliest Christian communities. Cassian appeals to the descriptions of the earliest Christians in Acts for his genealogy of asceticism. We shall have some more to say about this later.⁷ At present, we should observe how, following Eusebius’ history of Egypt’s earliest communities,⁸ Cassian notes that the rigours of the first Christian ascetics included devotion to prayer as well as strict fasting.⁹ How to safeguard this devotion was a matter of ‘holy division of pious dispute’¹⁰ among the desert fathers, until the problem was resolved by angelic visitation.¹¹ It is this, the ‘Angelic Rule’, the norm for all communal prayers in Scetis,¹² which Cassian describes.

though, that this problem was not Cassian’s. Throughout the *Institutes*, Cassian distinguishes the Thebaïd (2.3.1, 4; 4.1, 23, 30.2) and Tabennisi in particular (4.1, 10, 17, 30.2) from ‘all Egypt’ (=Scetis; pref. 3, 8; 2.2.2, 3.1, 4, 5.5; 3.1; 4.17, 30.2, 30.4, 31-32; 5.24, 36.1, 39.2; 10.22-23), as at 2.3.1, 4; 4.1, 17, 30.2. Though his use of the term ‘all Egypt’ for Scetis is confusing, this does not undermine his reliability.

⁵ Thus, Cassian, *conl* 13.1, 15.1, 17.3, 21.11, 22.1.1

⁶ Cassian, *inst* 2.3.1; see also 2.2.2, 2.3.1-5, 2.4. At *inst* 2.9.1, Cassian again defers full treatment of canonical prayer until it can be properly contextualised ‘earum (sc., orationum) qualitate seu iugitate uerbis eorum (sc., maiorum)’. At *conl* 21.12, Abba Theonas gives a programmatic statement of Cassian’s traditionalism: ‘Oportet quidem nos auctoritati patrum consuetudinisque maiorum usque ad nostrum tempus per tantam annorum seriem protelatae etiam non percepta ratione concedere eamque, ut antiquitus tradita est, iugi observantia ac reverentia custodire.’

⁷ See pp. 185-186, below.

⁸ Cf. Cassian, *inst* 2.5.1-3 to Eusebius, *HE* 2.17, (Bardy 1952), 1.72-77; see (Guy 1965), pp. 66-7; (de Vogüé 1961)

⁹ Cassian, *inst* 2.5.2

¹⁰ Cassian, *inst* 2.5.4: ‘piae contentionis sancta diversitas’

¹¹ Cassian, *inst* 2.5.4-2.6; cf. Palladius, *HL* 32.6-7, (Bartelink 1974), pp. 165-156; *u ter Pach* 29-32, (Halkin 1932), where an alternate account of the provenance of the ‘Angelic Rule’ is related; and John of Gaza, *ep* 143, (Neyt 1998), 520-524, in which he describes the ‘Angelic Rule’ in some detail according to the tradition of Scete; see also (Veilleux 1968) pp. 334-339.

¹² Cassian, *inst* 2.4, 6.2: ‘tam in uespertinis quam in nocturnis conuenticulis (sc., hunc numerum psalmorum)’

After being summoned by a brother appointed for that task,¹³ the monks assemble with perfect silence in the oratory.¹⁴ They sit on low stools and the cantor arises in the midst of them.¹⁵ During the service no fewer than two cantors will sing the prayers, although (regardless of how many monks are present) there are never more than four.¹⁶ Except for the stools, Cassian does not mention any particular furnishings in the room, such as a lectern. Perhaps they simply stood up from their stools and chanted where they stood.¹⁷ Cassian does not explain what precisely the rest of the monks do while the cantors sing the psalms and prayers. There are, however, indications that they remain seated. For instance, he heavily emphasises that the singing of the Psalter gives the monks a much-needed opportunity to rest.¹⁸

The cantors sing a total of twelve psalms antiphonally.¹⁹ Prayers are inserted between Psalms, and even within them.²⁰ The interspersed prayers during psalmody facilitate comprehension and reduce the distracting tedium that would come from long runs of psalms.²¹ For just this reason, an elder keeps watch to insure that no longwinded cantor bores the audience. If it appears to him that such a thing is happening, the elder

¹³ Cassian, *inst* 2.17; 4.12: the monks drop what they were doing to come to prayer or obey any other summons; cf. *apoph* Mark, student of Silvanus, 1 (PG 65.293-296)

¹⁴ Cassian, *inst* 2.10.1 (silence); 3.7.1, 4.20 (oratory)

¹⁵ Cassian, *inst* 2.12.1

¹⁶ Cassian, *inst* 2.11.3

¹⁷ Abba Nesteros commends the memorisation of Scripture (Cassian, *conl* 14.10.4). Given the prominence of the Psalter in the services according to Cassian, the Psalms would be a likely place to start! The monks may well have chanted the Psalter from memory. Some of the Desert Fathers famously had capacious memories; see (Ramsey 1997), p. 531.

¹⁸ Cassian, *inst* 2.12.1-3

¹⁹ Cassian, *inst* 2.4, 5.5

²⁰ Cassian, *inst* 2.11.1-2

²¹ Cassian, *inst* 2.11.2: Cassian warns against singing *cum confusione mentis effundi*. Cf. *conl* 14.12: Cassian's own confession, made in the first person (which he rarely uses), that memories from his youthful education distract him during prayer and psalmody. On Cassian's education and the place of education in his monasteries, see (Hammer 1930), esp. pp. 249-255.

can signal for prayer by clapping his hands.²² Cassian does not take distractions lightly. No doubt with reference to what he saw in Gaul, Cassian sharply notes that during the services in Egypt, ‘spittle does not fly, snorting does not rumble, coughing does not resound, the sleepy yawn is not protracted by slack and gaping mouths, no groans, not even sighs burden those present.’²³ These uncouth interruptions are designated as ‘double sins’ since they not only betray negligence, but they also create distractions.²⁴ However, distraction is ultimately one’s own responsibility, as a thought-experiment of Cassian’s shows. ‘But to speak directly, if anyone, turning the matter over in his conscience, finds out that he has celebrated just one service without any interruption by word, deed or thought, he may proclaim himself far removed from sin.’²⁵

Cassian grants an exception to his strict expectations about silence when describing the reaction of someone who is completely attentive at the service. He mentions the periodic sound ‘which through the mind’s transport emerges from the enclosure of the mouth’ – *per excessum mentis claustra oris effugerit* – ‘that sound, which the inflamed mind does not succeed in containing in itself, through a certain ineffable groaning attempts to break out from the deepest recesses of his breast’ – *per ineffabilem quendam gemitum ex intimis pectoris sui conclauibus euaporare conatur*.²⁶ Elsewhere,

²² Cassian, *inst* 2.11.2

²³ Cassian, *inst* 2.10.1: ‘non sputus emittitur, non excreatio obstrepat, non tussis intersonat, non oscitatio somnolenta dissutis malis et hiantibus trahitur, nulli gemitus, nulla suspiria etiam adstantes inpeditura promuntur.’

²⁴ Cassian, *inst* 2.10.2: ‘dupliciter peccare pronuntiant’; see also *conl* 23.6.3 and cf. *inst* 12.27.2-3, where Cassian describes a prideful monk clearing his throat, squirming and doodling with his fingers during a conference; see too Rufinus, *HM* 29.4.5-9, (Schulz-Flügel 1990), p. 372.

²⁵ Cassian, *conl* 23.19.1: ‘immo uero quisquis considerans conscientiam suam, ut non dicam amplius, unam saltem synaxin sine ulla uerbi uel facti uel cogitationis interpellatione se deprehenderit celebrasse, absque peccato se esse pronuntiet.’

²⁶ Cassian, *inst* 2.10.1

Cassian similarly notes that the cantor's voice can prompt a deep emotional response.²⁷

This is unusual, but it does occur. Such occurrences impressed Cassian very much.

Once the cantor has completed the Psalm, the monks kneel to pray.²⁸ Cassian describes the physical procedure as follows:

[...] Before bending the knees, they pray a little and standing they pass the great part of the time in supplication. And so after this for the briefest interval falling to the ground, as ones only adoring divine mercy, with all speed they surge up and, upright once more, with their hands outstretched in the same way as before they stood praying, they linger at their prayers. For those lying on the ground too long are beset upon not only by thoughts, they say, but also more seriously by sleep.²⁹

The process is arduous. The danger of falling asleep (which is significant when this strenuous regimen is observed at night!) compounds the risk of intrusive thoughts, a familiar concern from Evagrius.³⁰ We should have in mind these regular prostrations when we read Cassian's description of Abba Chaeremon, whose great old age together with his devoted prayer have bent his back considerably.³¹ The process is also time-consuming. Everything is done at a measured and dignified pace,³² which is monitored, as we have noted, by the elders. Cassian contrasts this to the practice of his contemporaries, who rush through their prayers.³³

The monks take their cue for when to arise from the one who will then say a prayer.³⁴ So it goes for the first eleven psalms. But since Cassian makes a point of

²⁷ Cassian, *conl* 9.26.1-2. N.B. Cassian has recourse to the Stoic distinction between 'emotions' and 'passions'; I have analysed this, and commented on some of the practical consequences, elsewhere: (Casiday 2001b), pp. 362-363 (the Stoic distinction), 384-387 (Cassian's doctrine).

²⁸ Cassian, *inst* 2.7.1

²⁹ Cassian, *inst* 2.7.2: 'Apud illos ergo non ita est, sed antequam flectant genua, paulisper orant et stantes in supplicatione maiorem temporis partem expendunt. Itaque post haec puncto brevissimo procident humi, uelut adorantes tantum diuinam clementiam, summa uelocitate consurgunt ac rursus erecti expansis manibus eodem modo, quo prius stantes orauerant, suis precibus inmorantur. Humi namque diutius procumbentem non solum cogitationibus aiunt uerum etiam sommo grauius inpuignari.'

³⁰ See pp. 64-66, 78, 82-84, above.

³¹ Cassian, *conl* 11.4.1

³² Cassian, *inst* 2.7.1-3, 11.2

³³ Cassian, *inst* 2.7.1, 7.3

³⁴ Cassian, *inst* 2.7.3

telling that the Angel sang eleven of the psalms ‘in the same tone’³⁵ and in this way distinguished them from the twelfth psalm, we should expect something different in the Fathers’ practice for the concluding psalm. Cassian is unclear on the matter. But he does stipulate that the response is only ‘Alleluia’ when the psalm has the word ‘Alleluia’ in its title.³⁶ Comparing this to the Angelic Rule,³⁷ and recalling that the Angel finished the twelfth psalm with the response ‘Alleluia’ before vanishing,³⁸ we have good grounds for supposing that the practice at Scetis was that the last psalm should end with the response ‘Alleluia’.

Finally, the priest concludes the prayers with the Gloria.³⁹ Although this actually concludes the service, many monks remain. Cassian describes these monks as those who are ‘willing and eager to retain the memory of the Divine Scriptures by assiduous meditation’,⁴⁰ because they opt to remain for two readings from Scripture. During the week, one reading is taken from the Old Testament and one from the New. But on the weekends, the one reading comes from the Epistles or Acts of the Apostles and the other comes from the Gospels.

Cassian devotes such attention to his account of how to pray simply because the correct procedure of prayer is important.⁴¹ We get a sense of its importance from *Conference 21*. During Pentecost, Cassian and Germanus pray vespers in their cell,

³⁵ Cassian, *inst* 2.5.5: ‘parili pronuntiatione’

³⁶ Cassian, *inst* 2.11.3; ‘The psalms with an Alleluia in their title are, in the Hebrew enumeration, 105-107, 111-114, 116-118, 135-136, 146-150’, (Ramsey 1997), p. 53.

³⁷ (Guy 1965), p. 78 fn. 1: ‘La “règle de l’ange” prescrit en effet qu’à chaque synaxe le douzième et dernier psaume soit achevé *sub alleluiae responsione*.’

³⁸ Cassian, *inst* 2.5.5: ‘...duodecimum sub alleluiae responsione consummans...’

³⁹ Cassian, *inst* 2.10.1 (conclusion); *inst* 2.8 (gloria)

⁴⁰ Cassian, *inst* 2.6: ‘... uolentibus tantum ac diuinarum scripturarum memoriam possidere adsidua meditatione studentibus...’

⁴¹ Cassian, *inst* 2.9.1

accompanied by the visiting Abba Theonas.⁴² Since the meeting took place during Pentecost, they did not kneel during the prayers. They seize the opportunity to ask Theonas why no one kneels for prayer during Pentecost. Theonas explains that bending the knee during prayer is a sign of mourning and repentance, and is therefore unsuitable during Pentecost.⁴³ Balancing orthopraxy and orthodoxy is a prime concern for Cassian. For just this reason, he dedicated his first work to external aspects of monastic life and thus prepared the way to explain the internal aspects of monastic life in his second work.⁴⁴ In due course we will consider the theological significance of prayer, so it is important here to acknowledge Cassian's conviction that right understanding is rooted in right worship.

In addition to the corporate prayers during the evening, Cassian relates that the monks resume their prayers upon returning to their cells. It was precisely at this time that Abba Theodore caught Cassian bedding down and reprimanded him.⁴⁵ Because the Psalter is read in *kathismata*, the monks are allowed an opportunity to rest. Since they sit during the psalms, they are sufficiently rested that 'once more they celebrate the office of prayers as a personal sacrifice more eagerly'⁴⁶ and no one sleeps thereafter. Part of the motivation for working through the night is that the torpor of sleep would deprive the monk of the value of his prayers and psalms.⁴⁷ Working through the night also reduces

⁴² Cassian, *conl* 21.11: 'Igitur abba Theonas cum diebus Quinquagensimae nos in nostra cellula uisitasset, uespertina orationum sollemnitate transacta.'

⁴³ Cassian, *conl* 21.20.3

⁴⁴ Cassian, *inst* 2.9.1: '... ut formantes interim exterioris hominis motus et uelut quaedam nunc orationis fundamenta iacentes minore post haec labore, cum coeperimus de statu interioris hominis disputare, orationum quoque eius fastigia construamus.' Cassian makes the contrast explicitly at *inst* 2.9.3 and again at *conl* pref 5.

⁴⁵ Cassian, *inst* 5.35

⁴⁶ Cassian, *inst* 2.12.3: 'idem rursus orationum officium uelut peculiare sacrificium studiosius celebrant'

⁴⁷ Cassian, *inst* 2.13.1-3; 3.8.1-4

the possibility of a nocturnal emission of semen, which would similarly undercut the value of the prayers and psalms already recited.⁴⁸

Germanus is aware of this possibility, and draws attention to another consequence of nocturnal emissions. He admits that when this happens, it makes him reluctant to pray as he ought to do when he arises from sleep.⁴⁹ This is a serious problem: monks ought to offer God prayers immediately upon awakening, as the ‘first-fruits of all their movements’.⁵⁰ This indicates that monks in their cells spend a great deal of time at prayer during the evening and early morning hours. Prayer at these times is the tissue that connects the instructions on evening prayer with those on daytime prayer. Although Cassian knows the three daytime hours (terce, none and sext),⁵¹ he discusses them later, since they are not observed in Scetis.

Cassian grounds his discussion on the basic difference between daytime prayers and night-time prayers – the time of day at which they are prayed. By doing so, he opts against another salient difference between the cycles in the Egyptian practice.⁵² In Scetis, the daily services are further distinguished from the nightly services because they are not prayed in the synaxis, but rather privately while one continues working in his cell.⁵³ This custom deprives monks of the support of communal worship throughout the day, however. Following his stated preference for tempering the inimitably demanding rule of

⁴⁸ Cassian, *inst* 2.13.1-2; cf. pp. 45-46, above.

⁴⁹ Cassian, *conl* 21.35

⁵⁰ Cassian, *conl* 21.26.2-3: ‘cunctorum motuum suorum primitias.’

⁵¹ Cassian, *inst* 2.2.2: ‘diurnis orationum officiis, id est tertia, sexta nonaque id usum est.’ See (Taft 1993), pp. 58-62, and (Heiming 1961), pp. 102-113.

⁵² Cassian, *inst* 3.2

⁵³ This claim is well corroborated: see *apoph* Macarius the Great 33, Abba of Rome 1 (PG 65.273-277, 385-389); Palladius, *HL* 7.5, (Bartelink 1974), pp. 38-40; Rufinus, *HM* 22.2.3, (Schulz-Flügel 1990), p. 358; and Athanasius, *u Ant* 3.6, (Bartelink 1994), p. 138. See also (Dattrino 1986), esp. pp. 170-174.

Egypt,⁵⁴ Cassian looks elsewhere for a model of daily prayers. For this, he reverts to practices he learned in Palestine and Syria.⁵⁵

The general principle for each office is that three psalms are recited with prayers – conforming to the practice of Daniel (Dan 6.11), and allowing the monks to continue their work.⁵⁶ Cassian offers scriptural precedents for praying at the third, sixth and ninth hours. This is worth noting. Not only does Cassian interleave scripture and prayer in practice, he is also dependent upon scripture for his account of prayer on the whole. Thus, the third hour was when the Holy Spirit was poured forth upon the Apostles while they prayed (Acts 2.14-18).⁵⁷ The sixth hour is related not only to Our Lord's crucifixion (Lk 23.44),⁵⁸ but also to the revelation about the Gentiles that came to Peter during prayer (Acts 10.10ff).⁵⁹ The ninth hour is justified not only because of Our Lord's harrowing of hell,⁶⁰ but also because at this hour Cornelius was visited by an angel during prayer (Acts 10.3). Furthermore, Peter's vision was explained to him, and elsewhere we learn that Peter and John went to the Temple at the ninth hour for prayer (Acts 3.1).⁶¹ Cassian even

⁵⁴ Cassian, *inst* 3.1; cf. pref 9

⁵⁵ Cf. (Guy 1965), pp. 92-93 n.1; (Martimort 1986); (Van der Mensbrugghe 1957); (Taft 1993), pp. 66-73

⁵⁶ Cassian, *inst* 3.3.1

⁵⁷ Cassian, *inst* 3.3.2

⁵⁸ Cassian, *inst* 3.3.3-4: 'Hora autem sexta immaculata hostia Dominus noster atque Saluator oblatus est Patri, crucemque pro totius mundi salute conscendens humani generis peccata deleuit...'

⁵⁹ Ibid.: 'Eadem quoque hora Petro in excessu mentis uocatio gentium ... reuelatur.'

⁶⁰ The harrowing of Hell is described variously in a number of early Christian writings; e.g., *od Sal* 17.9-16, 42.3-20, (Charlesworth 1977), pp. 74, 143-144; *ep apos aeth* 37-39, (Guerria 1913), pp. 208-210; *acta Tho* 10, (Bonnet 1883), p. 10.19-23; *doct Syl* 104.2-14, 110.19-34, (Janssens 1983), pp. 66, 78; *Herm sim* 9.93.16.1-7, (Joly 1958), pp. 326-328; *eu Nic lat* 18.1-27.2, (Kim 1973), pp. 35-49 (though this could be a later accretion); *Jer apoch* (= *log.* 45 in (Resch 1906), pp. 320-322, where the passage is cited from both Irenaeus and Justin Martyr); *apos trad* 4.8, (Dix 1992), p. 8; Melito, *pas* 100-103, (Perler 1966), pp. 120-122; Clement, *strom* 2.9.43.5-2.9.44.4, (Camelot 1954), pp. 68-69, and 6.6.45-48.2, (Descourtieux 1999), pp. 150-158; Origen, *Cels* 2.43, (Borret 1967), p. 382. See also (Bauckham 1992), pp. 156-158, and, more generally, (Trumbower 2001).

⁶¹ Cassian, *inst* 3.3.6-7

extends his virtuoso invocation of scriptural precedents to justify the evening and morning services previously described.⁶²

In conclusion, Cassian lists the total number of daily services: ‘At these same times too the householder in the Gospel led workers into his vineyard. And so he is said to have led them in at first light, which time designates our morning service [1], then at the third [2], then at the sixth [3], next at the ninth [4] and finally at the eleventh hour, in which is symbolised the hour of lighting the lamps [5].’⁶³ Together with the two daily synaxes, this makes a total of seven daily offices. Cassian’s description of the development in Bethlehem of ‘matutinam nostram sollemnitatem’, at which Pss 50, 62 and 89 are chanted,⁶⁴ has been much discussed by liturgiologists and others.⁶⁵ For our purposes, the practical aspect of this service is most relevant. Because the monks at Bethlehem were in the regrettable habit of returning to bed after matins, this service was developed to keep them awake.⁶⁶ The motivation for this is identical to that of the Egyptian practice of keeping vigil⁶⁷ – to which he likens it, though as but a pale shadow.⁶⁸

This is the order of services for weekdays. For weekends, and for major feasts, the order of services varies slightly. Cassian notes that the offices are modified on

⁶² Cassian, *inst* 3.3.8-11

⁶³ Cassian, *inst* 3.3.11: ‘In his quoque horis etiam ille euangelicus pater familias operarios conduxit in vineam suam [Mt. 20.1-16]. Ita enim et ille primo mane conduxisse describitur, quod tempus designat matutinam nostram sollemnitatem, dein tertia, inde sexta, post haec nona, ad extremum undecima, in qua lucernaris hora signatur.’

⁶⁴ Cassian, *inst* 3.6

⁶⁵ Cassian, *inst* 3.4.1-5. For the recent discussion, see (Taft 1993), pp. 195-209, who thinks Cassian describes ‘second Matins’ (p. 209); (Chadwick 1948), pp. 179-181, argues it was Prime; (Froger 1946) and (Froger 1952), who maintains that Cassian is describing the origin of Lauds; and (Hanssens 1952) – who thinks Cassian is describing the development of Prime or ‘quelque office de fonction analogue’ (p. 45). For a convenient synopsis of the debate between Froger and Hanssens, see (Raffa 1953).

⁶⁶ Cassian, *inst* 3.4.1-2, 5.1-2

⁶⁷ Cassian, *inst* 2.13.1-3

⁶⁸ Cassian, *inst* 3.5.2

Sundays, ‘pro reuerentia dominicae resurrectionis’, such that one office only is prayed before lunch. In the fulfilment of this office, the monks regard terce and sext fulfilled as well.⁶⁹ The regulations for fasting also differ.⁷⁰ On Saturdays, Sundays and feasts, supper as well as lunch is served – but the evening psalm is not said, neither before nor after the meal, in exception to the general practice.⁷¹ In place of this, they begin the meal with one prayer and end it with one prayer.⁷² Again, as with the practice of not bending the knee during Pentecost, theological principle overrides and modifies customs of worship.

Finally, there is also an indication, albeit a modest one, that monks outside the monastery should nonetheless keep the monastery’s rule of prayer. Abba Serenus relates the eerie tale of a monk who spied on a meeting of the demons and thus learnt of a fellow monk’s fall into sin. The monk was holed up in a cave in the wilderness when he beheld the conventicle. The reason he was there is important. ‘For when one of our brothers had made a journey in the wilderness, coming upon a certain cave while dusk fell he stopped, wishing to celebrate the evening service in it. While he sang the Psalms there according to custom, it was well past midnight...’⁷³ The monk sang the Psalms *ex more*; but does this mean according to the custom regarding monks outside the monastery, or according to the monastery’s custom regarding which Psalms to sing? What exactly

⁶⁹ Cassian, *inst* 3.11: ‘...in ipsa tertiam sextamque pariter consummatam reputant’

⁷⁰ Cassian, *inst* 3.9.1-3.10

⁷¹ Cassian, *inst* 3.12: ‘Denique etiam in ipsis diebus, id est sabbato uel dominica seu feriatis temporibus, quibus prandium pariter et cena solet fratribus exhiberi, psalmus ad uesperam non dicitur, id est nec cum accedunt ad cenam nec cum ab ipsa consurgunt, ut solet fieri in sollemnibus prandiis uel canonica ieiuniorum refectione, quam et praecedere consuetudinarii psalmi solent et subsequi...’

⁷² Ibid.: ‘...sed tantummodo simplici oratione facta accedunt ad cenam eamque rursum consurgentes ab ipsa sola oratione concludunt.’ Cf. Abba Moses’ discussion of rules about eating associated with evening prayers and vigils (Cassian, *conl* 2.26.3).

Cassian meant is unclear. In any event, with this story Cassian anticipates the stipulation of St Benedict's Rule that monks ought to observe the offices when outside the monastery on approved business.⁷⁴ Furthermore, despite the monastic ideal of the stationary life stated so frequently (not least by Cassian himself!),⁷⁵ he casually relates that Egyptian monks sometimes went on pilgrimage to the Holy Lands – to pray there.⁷⁶

The mention of demons merits a brief aside, since Cassian gives some attention to them elsewhere. For instance, Cassian indicates that that earliest cœnobites warded off the demons, who were particularly ferocious by night, by means of psalmody, prayer and readings. They would therefore take shifts, so that someone was always awake, praying, reading or psalmodising.⁷⁷ Demons actively oppose the life of virtue, but prayer effectively keeps them at bay. Thus, when two magicians send evil spirits to torment Antony the Great, he defends himself by crossing himself and praying.⁷⁸ Cassian particularly endorses David's prayer at Ps. 35.1-3 for repulsing the evil spirits, who are the appropriate objects for our hatred and prayers full of invective.⁷⁹ Cassian thus anticipates the teaching laid down in the Rule of Iṣō' bar Nūn: 'The monk shall prevail

⁷³ Cassian, *conl* 8.16.1-4: 'Nam cum unus e fratribus nostris in hac solitudine iter ageret, aduesperante iam die antrum quoddam repperiens ibidem substitit, uespertinam uolens in eo synaxin celebrare: ubi dum psalmos ex more decantat, tempus mediae noctis excessit...' See also (Weber 1961), pp. 91-93.

⁷⁴ *RB* 50, (Hanslik 1978), p. 133

⁷⁵ Cassian, *conl* 6.15, 7.23.3, 24.3.1-2 and 6.1-3; *apoph* Antony 10, Evagrius 1, Macarius the Great 41 (PG 65.77, 173, 281); Palladius, *HL* 16.1-6 (Bartelink 1974), pp. 64-70. Related are Cassian's (*conl* 18.7), Jerome's (*ep* 22, (Labourt 1949-1955), 1.110-160) and Benedict's (*RB* 1.6-9, (Hanslik 1978), pp. 19-20) and the Master's (*RM* 1.13-74, 7.22-46, (de Vogüé 1964-1965), 1.332-346, 386-390) harangues against the 'sarabaites', 'remnouth' and 'gyrovagues'.

⁷⁶ Cassian, *inst* 4.31; cf. Evagrius' travels into Alexandria (*HL* syr 72.3 'On Stephen', (Draguet 1978), 2.366-367), sometimes to dispute with philosophers (*Paradisus Patrum* 9 (PG 65.448)).

⁷⁷ Cassian, *conl* 7.23.1

⁷⁸ Cassian, *conl* 8.18.2: 'Cumque illo nunc quidem inprimente pectori suo frontique signaculum crucis, nunc uero orationi suppliciter incubante ne adproximare quidem dirissimi daemones eidem prorsus auderent...'

⁷⁹ Cassian, *conl* 7.21.6, 8

when thoughts encircle him if he chant a Psalm, since it is a cure for thoughts.’⁸⁰ Cassian also introduces a theme familiar from Evagrius: the need for short, frequent prayers so as to evade the temptations of the Devil.⁸¹

Even after this detailed account of prayer, Cassian has not finished. Fr. Victor Codina has called Cassian, ‘the first pilgrim who recounted to the Latins the secrets of the Easterners’ continual prayer.’⁸² So we will want to examine what he makes of the Pauline injunction at 1 Thess. 5.17: ‘Pray without ceasing.’⁸³ Cassian’s strategy for satisfying the Apostle’s order is distinctive. In the first place, he decisively rejects any scheme for being supported by others so as to be free to pray all the time. This was a great plan he and Germanus put to Abba Abraham for his blessing.⁸⁴ Abraham’s crashing rejoinder comes by way of an anecdote about Antony the Great, who was similarly petitioned by a young man: By hitching his spiritual progress to the shifting fortunes of his family, the young man could not hope to attain the great inner calm needed for prayer; furthermore, he deprived himself of the spiritual fruits of labouring for his own sustenance.⁸⁵ But if leisurely retirement is not an acceptable means to ceaseless prayer, how can it be accomplished?

⁸⁰ Iṣō’ bar Nūn, *reg arab* 16, (Vööbus 1960), p. 203: الراهب متى احتوت عليه الافكار يجب ان يشس مزمورا فهو دوا للفكر On Iṣō’ bar Nūn, see (Baumstark 1922), pp. 219-20; (Ortiz de Urbina 1965), p. 216.

⁸¹ Cassian, *inst* 2.10.3; *conl* 9.36.1: ‘Quamobrem utilius censent breues quidem orationes sed creberrimas fieri...’; cf. *RB* 20.3, (Hanslik 1978), p. 82.

⁸² (Codina 1966), p. 100: ‘Casiano es el primer peregrino que cuenta a los latinos los secretos de la oración continua de los orientales ...’ [sic].

⁸³ See Cassian, *inst* 8.13: following Mt 5.23-4, 1 Thess 5.17 and 1 Tim 2.8, Cassian asserts the need for constant prayer at all times and places. See (Stewart 1984).

⁸⁴ Cassian, *conl* 24.10

⁸⁵ Cassian, *conl* 24.11.1-12.4

The solution, at least in part, lies in Cassian's willingness to countenance imperfection.⁸⁶ Accepting imperfection in no way implies tolerating complacency, however. Ceaseless prayer requires the struggle of the spiritual life, *praktikè*. This struggle and the life of prayer are ultimately identical. From the beginning, prayer is crucial in the effort to overcome vice.⁸⁷ But Cassian also gives many examples of the importance of prayer in the acquisition of virtues, such as chastity,⁸⁸ obedience,⁸⁹ humility,⁹⁰ moderation,⁹¹ and abstinence.⁹² He crowns his discussion of virtues with the brilliant metaphor of the ambidextrous man.⁹³ The spiritually ambidextrous man sends up to God pure and swift prayers with the right hand, but can be abandoned by prayer during assaults from the left hand – for which reason he must turn both hands into right hands. So prayer is not only a precondition for attaining the virtues – it also consummates the ascetic struggle.⁹⁴ Prayer is in fact the ultimate goal of the monastic life.⁹⁵

⁸⁶ Cassian, *conl* 23 is a great example.

⁸⁷ Cassian, *conl* 5.14.1-5

⁸⁸ See Cassian, *inst* 6.1, 17; cf. *conl* 4.12.4; 12.4.4, 8.5, 12.6; and 7.2.1-2: Abba Serenus obtained interior chastity of heart and soul (*interna cordis atque animae castitate*), the answer of his prayers (*orationum suarum ... uota*), by tirelessly insisting with beseeching day and night, fasts and vigils also (*nocturnis diurnisque precibus, ieiuniis quoque ac uigiliis infatigabiliter insistens*).

⁸⁹ Cassian, *inst* 5.40.2: the two obedient boys who die of starvation rather than eating the figs they were ordered to deliver pray before dying (like Christ, no doubt). Thus is their obedience crowned.

⁹⁰ Cassian, *conl* 11.9.3. Cassian recognises that humility can be feigned. So Abba Piamun's story about how Abba Serapion 'neatly mocked the pretence of humility' (*humilitatis figmentum abbas Sarapion ... eleganter inrisit*) of a sarabaites, or vagrant monk, who claimed to be too unworthy even to pray with the others (Cassian, *conl* 18.11.2; cf. Apoph. Serapion 4) can be taken as a proviso that the humility must be genuine.

⁹¹ Cassian, *conl* 1.17.2: 'idcirco uigiliarum ac ieiuniorum orationumque sedulitas adhibetur, ut extenuata mens non terrena sapiat, sed caelestia contempletur.' Cf. *inst* 5.9; *conl* 1.20.4, 2.16.2-17.1

⁹² Cassian, *conl* 2.22.2

⁹³ Cassian, *conl* 6.10.2-3; (Sheridan 2000), pp. 287-89; (Ramsey 1997), p. 239 is helpful.

⁹⁴ Cf. Cassian, *conl* 21.33.6: praying for one's enemies is a sign that one *hic peccati reppulit iugum ac uincla disruptit*.

⁹⁵ Cassian, *conl* 9.2.1: 'Omnis monachi finis cordisque perfectio ad iugem atque indisruptam orationis perseuerantiam tendit, et quantum humanae fragilitati conceditur, ad immobilem tranquillitatem mentis ac perpetuam nititur puritatem, ob quam omnem tam laborem corporis quam contritionem spiritus indefesse

It is therefore significant that, in his conference on prayer, Abba Isaac insists that ascetic struggle is never left behind. The monk must always strive to pray without ceasing. If this struggle ends, the monk's prayer is immediately 'plunged into earthly things'.

Whoever is used to praying only at such time as the knee is bent, prays very little. But whoever, even on bended knee, is distracted by any sort of wandering heart, prays not at all. And for this reason, it behoves us even before the time of prayer to be such as we would wish to be found at prayer. For it is necessary that the mind be formed at the time of its supplication by its previous condition, and by those thoughts on which it had tarried before prayer its prayer is either elevated to heavenly things or else plunged into earthly things.⁹⁶

Cassian goes further. He envisions not just passive acceptance of trials, but even prayerful solicitation of them. Thus, he interprets Ps. 25.2 ('Examine me, O Lord, and prove me: try my reins and my heart') as David's prayer for the 'salutary cleansing' of tribulations.⁹⁷ Abba Daniel cites Ps 119.8 as evidence that David prayed, not to not be abandoned (which is spiritually profitable),⁹⁸ but rather not to be abandoned indefinitely.⁹⁹ This is the experience of the vicissitudes of prayer, a trial that teaches the need for 'instance of prayers'.¹⁰⁰

The instruction to pray without ceasing, like the biblical command 'Be ye perfect', does not admit of an easy solution. Instead, it necessitates a concerted, life-long effort. The

quaerimus et iugiter exercemus.' On the 'immobile tranquility and perpetual purity of the mind', see (Marsili 1936), pp. 12-6; *tranquillitas* may be taken as the Latin for *hesychia*, (Miquel 1986), pp. 143-80.

⁹⁶ Cassian, *conl* 10.14.2: 'Perparum namque orat, quisquis illo tantum tempore quo genua flectuntur orare consuevit. Numquam uero orat, quisquis etiam flexis genibus euagatione cordis qualicumque distrahitur. Et idcirco quales orantes uolumus inueniri, tales nos esse oportet ante tempus orandi. Necesse est enim mentem in tempore supplicationis suae de statu praecedente formari illisque eam cogitationibus orantem uel ad caelestia sublimari uel ad terrena demergi, quibus ante orationem fuerit inmorata.'

⁹⁷ Cassian, *conl* 6.11.3: 'salutari emundatione'; comparing this with Evagrius, in *Ps* 25.2a, reveals Cassian as more Evagrian than Evagrius! Cf. *conl* 5.15.2: 'Non enim orasset propheta dicens: ne tradas, domine, bestiis animam confitentem tibi [Ps. 74.19], nisi scisset propter inflationem cordis quosdam, ut humiliarentur, eisdem rursus uitiiis quae uicerant tradi.' This is evidence at least of praying for one's spiritual development, however difficult that development may be.

⁹⁸ Cf. Evagrius, in *Iob* 40.8b, (Hagedorn 1994-2000), 3.335 (= sch 28.14); (Driscoll 1997); Origen *CCt* 3.11.17, (Brésard 1991-1992), 2.606

⁹⁹ Cassian, *conl* 4.6.1

¹⁰⁰ Cassian, *conl* 4.4.2: 'orationum instantia'

Egyptian regime of working in one's cell, especially through the night, is on Cassian's presentation an important part of this effort.¹⁰¹ We might compare this to the later ascetic rule of the Constantinopolitan 'sleepless monks.'¹⁰² In the life of St Alexander the Sleepless, the founder, we read that it 'was called the monastery of the Akoimetoι [the 'Sleepless Ones'], on account of their ceaseless and ever sleepless songs of praise.'¹⁰³ Alexander had divided his monks into three choirs, so that they could sing in cycles and thus continually pray to God.¹⁰⁴ St Marcellus, who became the monastery's third abbot, when he arrived, found that by teaching his monks this method Alexander had 'given to men on earth an angelic way of life.'¹⁰⁵ Aside from the corporate character of their practice, which is in direct contrast to the private character of the Scetiot practice, this is happily compatible with what Cassian teaches about vigils. However, Cassian does not impose this strenuous observation on the monks of Gaul. And he does not reveal anything directly about unceasing prayer until a later Conference. Even then, it is only on the presumption that considerable progress has been made in virtue that Cassian says more about ceaseless prayer. So it is best to defer a complete treatment of unceasing prayer, as Cassian does.

- The practical and communal effects of prayer

¹⁰¹ Cf. (Dattrino 1986)

¹⁰² (Talbot 1991); (Pargoire 1898-1899); (Pargoire 1899), pp. 133-143

¹⁰³ *u Alex* 53, (de Stoop 1911), pp. 700-1: [μοναστήριον] τὸ ἐπιλεγόμενον τῶν ἀκοιμήτων διὰ τὴν ἀκατάπαυστον αὐτῶν καὶ πάντῃ ἄϋπνον δοξολογίαν...

¹⁰⁴ *u Alex* 43, (de Stoop 1911), p. 692

¹⁰⁵ *u Marc* 4, (Dagron 1968), p. 290: Ἐπείγεται οὖν πρὸς τὸν καλὸν Ἀλεξανδρον τότε ... ὃς μετὰ ταῦτα ἐν τῷ στόματι τοῦ Πόντου μοναστήριον ἰδρύσας πρῶτος ἔθηκεν τύπον ἀπαύστως ὑμνεῖν τὸν Θεὸν διαδοχῇ τῶν λειτουργούντων, ἀγγελικὴν πολιτείαν ἐπὶ γῆς τοῖς ἀνθρώποις παραδούς.

If Cassian is committed to unceasing prayer, the question naturally arises: why? What does prayer accomplish? Cassian describes the function of prayer in two largely distinct, though not separate, ways. For convenience, we can call the first the ‘private’ function of prayer and the second, the ‘communal’ function. At the onset, though, it must be stressed that both are related inasmuch as both are types of prayer for salvation. Since his account of the private function of prayer is rather more contained, we will turn to it first.

Cassian discusses the private function of prayer in his conference ‘On the protection of God’. He underscores the utter dependence of the Christian upon God. And he often does this by talking about Christian prayer. For instance, Chaeremon mentions the farmer, here an analogue of the monk, who must pray to God for his work to bear fruit. The farmer beseeches God to spare him from ‘unanticipated accidents, by which not only will his hope be frustrated by waiting in vain (even though the field is laden with the desired abundance of fruit), but even be cheated of the richness of the crop that has already been harvested and stored in the threshing-floor or granary.’¹⁰⁶ This memorable image draws our attention to the central relevance of supplication in Cassian’s teaching on prayer. When Abba Isaac enumerates the types of prayer,¹⁰⁷ he gives pride of place to supplication.

Supplication gets priority because we constantly sin, even unwillingly or in ignorance. Cassian is explicit: even the holy man is not able not to sin,¹⁰⁸ and so must

¹⁰⁶ Cassian, *conl* 13.3.4: ‘insperatos [...] casus, quibus, etiamsi desiderata fructuum fecunditate ager fuerit opimatus, non solum spei suae uana expectatione frustrabitur, uerum etiam perceptarum et reconditarum iam uel in area uel in horreo frugum ubertate fraudabitur.’

¹⁰⁷ Cassian, *conl* 9.9.1-9.14

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Augustine’s distinction ‘posse non peccare’, ‘non posse peccare’, e.g., *ciu* 22.30, CSEL 40(2).666.20-667.18

pray, 'Forgive us our debts' (Mt 6.12).¹⁰⁹ It is therefore necessary for us to pray with David, 'Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins' (Ps. 19.12-3).¹¹⁰ Chaeremon tirelessly resorts to the Psalms for supplicatory prayers. He teaches Germanus and Cassian to make the prayers of David their own. He weaves his explanation of grace and freedom from the Psalter, all the while giving full weight to attributing salvation to God.¹¹¹ He pointedly asks, 'But if we impute to our free will the attainment of virtues and accomplishment of God's commands, how do we pray: "Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought in us" (Ps. 68.28) and "Establish thou the work of our hands upon us" (Ps. 90.17)?'¹¹² Persistence in humble, supplicatory prayers does not go unnoticed. The case of Cornelius, called as a reward for his prayers and almsgiving,¹¹³ demonstrates the important role of prayer in 'repentance unto life' (Acts 11.18). Those who are suppliant find salvation. By supplicating God, we gain His unfailing support. 'Hence it is that at

¹⁰⁹ Cassian, *conl* 22.13.2: 'Haec enim sunt septem lapsuum genera, in quibus licet uir sanctus nonnumquam cadat, tamen iustus esse non desinit: quae quamuis leuia uideantur ac parua, tamen faciunt eum sine peccato esse non posse. Habet enim pro quibus cotidianam gerens paenitudinem et ueniam ueraciter debeat postulare et pro suis indesinenter orare peccatis dicens: Dimitte nobis debita nostra.'

¹¹⁰ Cassian, *conl* 20.12.2: 'Delicta quis intelligit? ab occultis meis munda me: et ab alienis parce seruo tuo.' Cf. *conl* 13.10.1, quoting Ps. 141.3.

¹¹¹ Cassian, *conl* 13.9.3-4: Chaeremon asks, 'quid sit quod orantes dicimus: dirige in conspectu tuo uiam meam [Ps. 5.8], et: perface gressus meos in semitis tuis: ut non moueantur uestigia mea? [Ps. 17.5] [...] uel certe quod orantes dicimus cum propheta: inlumina oculos meos ne umquam obdormiam in mortem [Ps. 13.3], nisi quod in his omnibus et gratia dei et libertas nostri declaratur arbitrii, quia etiam suis interdum motibus homo ad uirtutum adpetitus possit extendi, semper uero a domino indigeat adiuuari?' See also *conl* 13.12.9-10, where reference is made to Acts 8.22-3; Chaeremon does not limit himself to the Psalter.

¹¹² Cassian, *conl* 13.11.2: 'consummationem uero uirtutum et executionem mandatorum dei si nostro deputauerimus arbitrio, quomodo oramus: confirma deus hoc, quod operatus es in nobis, et: opera manuum nostrarum dirige super nos?'

¹¹³ Cassian, *conl* 13.15.2: 'Cornelio precibus et elemosynis iugiter insistenti uelut remunerationis uice uia salutis ostenditur eique angeli uisitatione praecipitur, ut accersiens Petrum uerba salutis ab eo quibus una cum omnibus suis saluaretur agnoscat.'

prayer we proclaim the Lord not only as protector and saviour, but also as helper and supporter.’¹¹⁴

An additional dimension of prayer emerges when Cassian discusses its communal function. This is evident in the formal structure of Cassian’s writings. Throughout the *Institutes* and the *Conferences*, Cassian regularly beseeches prayers for his writings.¹¹⁵ More than this, he entrusts himself to their prayers as well.¹¹⁶ These requests are not mere pious rhetoric.¹¹⁷ Instead, they are a natural extension of Cassian’s understanding of prayer’s role in building the Christian community, as further evidence shows. Cassian links prayer *for* one another and prayer *with* one another. We can best appreciate how he does this by turning to cases in which he talks about monks being suspended from the synaxis. These cases of ‘excommunication’ lead him to mention the importance of prayer on behalf of those suspended from the communal services. It is here that we see clearly how critical for Cassian’s theology is supplication on behalf of one’s fellows.

God grants mercy for the sake of the prayers of the community, and this is particularly the case with respect to someone who has transgressed the community’s standards (and thereby become separated from the community). The mercy of God and the prayers of the community can bring about such a person’s return to the community. Further anecdotes reveal that the prayers of the community for members within the community are no less potent. These prayers correct the wayward who have not yet strayed beyond the community’s limits. They also bolster the faltering – and, as we have

¹¹⁴ Cassian, *conl* 13.17.2: ‘Inde est quod orantes non solum protectorem ac saluatorem, sed etiam adiutorem ac susceptorem dominum proclamamus.’

¹¹⁵ Cassian, *inst* 4.10, V.1; *conl* pref., 24.1

¹¹⁶ Cassian, *conl* 24.26.19

¹¹⁷ (Codina 1966), pp. 125-6: ‘Aun admitiendo en estas frases cierto aspecto de retórica propia del tiempo, no hay duda que para Casiano este recurso a la oración es algo fundamental y necesario para su obra, y

had occasion to notice, everyone falters. This includes Cassian himself. Consequently, on the basis of his theological principles, we have good reason to believe that Cassian made his requests for prayers with all earnestness. The testimony given by Cassian provides ample (and often colourful) evidence of this complex process at work.

There are, according to Cassian's recollections, numerous grounds for being excluded from the community's prayers – and he mentions them so casually that we have no reason for supposing that the list even approximates completeness. The Scetiot fathers considered some matters actionable, though they seem frankly trifling to us. When a conscientious bursar reports to the Abbot that the cook for that week (*ebdomadarius*) has carelessly spilt and left three lentils, the cook is barred from the synaxis on grounds of his negligence.¹¹⁸ If someone breaks one of the monastery's earthenware dishes, he is liable to do penitence during the synaxis.¹¹⁹ If any of the monks, 'especially the younger ones', lingers with another, goes somewhere with another, or holds another by the hand, he may well be banned from the community's prayers for a time.¹²⁰ If anyone who arrives at the daytime services after the conclusion of the first psalm, or at the night-time services after the conclusion of the second psalm, and fails to repent acceptably (it comes as no surprise), he is barred from the next service.¹²¹ If anyone prays with someone who has been suspended from prayer, he is liable to do penitence during the prayers.¹²² This is quite different from praying *for* the suspended monk, which is something that the fathers

parece que van en aumento a medida que la obra avanza [I,1,1; Cfr. I,4,2; I,6,3; I,2-4; VI.2.2-4; VII, 1; VII.31.6-7. Cfr. Pref. I p. *Conl.* 4].'

¹¹⁸ Cassian, *inst* 4.20

¹¹⁹ Cassian, *inst* 4.16.1-2

¹²⁰ Cassian, *inst* 2.15.2: 'praecipue iuniores'

¹²¹ Cassian, *inst* 3.7.1-2

¹²² Cassian, *inst* 4.16.1-2; Guy claims Cassian looked to Pachomian practice for his inspiration: (Guy 1965), p. 142 n. 2; Ramsey also finds parallels: (Ramsey 2000), p. 107.

of Scetis actively encourage. Finally, heresy also separates its perpetrators from the community and is therefore grounds for being excluded from the services.¹²³

When describing the procedure of and rationale for banning a monk from the community's prayer, Cassian is particularly eager to forestall the misguided compassion of anyone who would take pity on a banned brother by praying with him and thus in effect worsen both that brother and himself. He worsens the brother and reinforces whatever sin he had committed by preventing the brother from being humbled by the punishment his sin has incurred. And he worsens himself by participating in that brother's condemnation – in effect, handing himself over to Satan, to whom (following St Paul) the brethren had handed over the sinful brother for a time.¹²⁴

These strict measures are not undertaken out of animosity, as is indicated by Cassian's insistence that prayers be offered for those banned from the services. Thus, Abba Serenus insists that we must pray for those who have been excommunicated, emphasising the ability of prayer to build up the community.¹²⁵ (This is important even when everything in the monastery is going well. Cassian's regulations for the rotating cycle of weekly tasks makes this clear. Those ending their cycle of duties wash the feet of their brethren to receive the blessing of their prayers.)¹²⁶ Furthermore, as Cassian learns from Abba Pinufius' invocation of Jas. 5.14-15, the prayers of the holy win pardon for the sins of others.¹²⁷ This is particularly effective when coupled with the prayers of the others themselves.¹²⁸ But despite this optimistic note, Abba Chaeremon's instruction

¹²³ Cf. *apoph* Theodore of Pherme 4 (PG 65.188); Poemen and Sisoës similarly (*apoph* Poemen 78, Sisoës 25 (PG 65.341, 400)) treat their heretical visitors with courtesy but do not pray with them.

¹²⁴ Cassian, *inst* 2.16; cf. 1 Cor 5.5, 1 Tim 1.20

¹²⁵ Cassian, *conl* 7.30

¹²⁶ Cassian, *inst* 4.19.2

¹²⁷ Cassian, *conl* 20.8.4

¹²⁸ Cassian, *conl* 20.8.7; cf. 3.15.2, 17

should be kept in mind. Referring to the ‘sins unto death’ mentioned at 1 Jn 5.18, Chaeremon insists that some people ought not be prayed for – though he does not specify who these people are, or what these sins are.¹²⁹

Turning from Cassian’s monastic treatises, we find in his Christological treatise additional evidence of this process at work in the case of Leporius.¹³⁰ Portrayed by Cassian as a Nestorianising Pelagian, Leporius was admonished by Cassian and then left Gaul.¹³¹ Eventually, Leporius found his way to North Africa, where Augustine oversaw his eventual reconciliation to the Church.¹³² Leporius’ theological deviance had alienated him from the Church, as is evident from the fact that he was reconciled to the Church after issuing a profession of faith.¹³³ In other words, heresy separates people from the worship of the community. This is made spectacularly clear in the case of Serapion, which we will discuss in due course. Most of the cases we have seen so far involve doing or failing to do something; in Leporius’ case, what is involved is the propagation of theological error. Because Cassian discusses Leporius’ situation within the context of his diatribe against Nestorius, and identifies Leporius as a Nestorian, it is worth noting that at the same time Cassian reproved Leporius¹³⁴ (and Nestorius!)¹³⁵ he prayed against the baneful influence of their Christological heresy.¹³⁶ Although Nestorius was recalcitrant,¹³⁷ Leporius’ penitence provides Cassian a sterling example of the grace of

¹²⁹ Cassian, *conl* 11.9.5

¹³⁰ (de Beer 1964)

¹³¹ Cassian, *inc* 1.4.2: ‘a nobis admonitus’

¹³² Cassian, *inc* 1.4.3; Augustine, *ep.* 219 (CSEL 57.428-431)

¹³³ (Demeulenaere 1985)

¹³⁴ Cassian, *inc* 1.4.2

¹³⁵ E.g., Cassian, *inc* 6.18.1

¹³⁶ Cassian, *inc* 7.1

¹³⁷ (Bedjan 1910); ET: (Driver 1925)

God acting at the petitions of the faithful to effect conversion.¹³⁸ Accordingly, prayers of thanksgiving are appropriate upon the reconciliation of an errant brother.¹³⁹

All the cases we have seen so far have in common that someone's sins place him outside the praying community. Other recollections of Cassian's demonstrate that even sins that do not separate one from the community need the prayers of others for their reconciliation. First, there is the case of the simple young man who sought the counsel of a strict elder.¹⁴⁰ The elder furiously chastised him and drove him to despair. So Abba Apollos prayed that the elder might experience the young man's temptation.¹⁴¹ And when the elder was chastened by this experience, at the prayer of Apollos God removed the temptation.¹⁴² Similarly, Abba Macarius' prayers loosen the punishment of one who argued with him and who was consequently possessed by an evil spirit.¹⁴³ Macarius thus exemplifies Chaeremon's interpretation of 'Father, forgive them' (Lk 23.34) as describing one who 'has attained to a disposition of goodness and to the imitation of God... [and] made his own the Lord's compassion' will pray for those who persecute him.¹⁴⁴ Finally, Cassian retells a long ordeal in which Abba Paphnutius' humility is revealed.¹⁴⁵ This is a standard topos – a monk is unjustly punished because of someone else's malice, who is then possessed by demons and can only be released by the prayer of

¹³⁸ Codina refers to the conversion of Leporius: (Codina 1966), pp. 124, 153-4, 158-160, 165-171, and at p. 178: 'Y si el recurso a la oración ha sido frecuente en el transcurso del *De Incarnatione*, si de Dios esperaba Casiano la conversión de Nestorio [I.4.1], como fue Dios al que convirtió a Leporio [I.4.2], al final del tratado no podía faltar de nuevo la invocación de la ayuda divina.'

¹³⁹ Cf. Cassian, *conl* 10.3.4: 'pro gratiarum actione surgentes preces domino pariter funderemus...'

¹⁴⁰ Cassian, *conl* 2.13.4-12

¹⁴¹ Cassian, *conl* 2.13.7

¹⁴² Cassian, *conl* 2.13.12, cf. 11.10: 'Ideoque isdem uitii monachum subiacere certissimum est, quae in alio inclementi atque inhumana seueritate condemnat'. Cf. (Weber 1961), pp. 32-5.

¹⁴³ Cassian, *conl* 7.27

¹⁴⁴ Cassian, *conl* 11.10.1

¹⁴⁵ Cassian, *conl* 18.15.1-8

the maligned innocent.¹⁴⁶ The description of Paphnutius as a penitent, weeping and praying, banned from the Eucharist, and at the church's threshold beseeching the pardon of those who assembled, is vivid and comparable to accounts of penitence from the Donatist controversy.¹⁴⁷

It would be a misrepresentation to suggest that prayer is primarily a means of coping with sin. Prayer is desirable in itself. Since prayer implies a special relationship to God, it has numerous collateral benefits. These benefits can be appreciated collectively if we consider the prophetic function of prayer in Cassian's writings. Now prophecy is interpretation of God's will. The prophet's is therefore a teaching vocation. This means it has a communal function. Very often in Cassian's writings he quotes some scriptural record of prayer as an authoritative witness in theological discussion. The nature of this authority is sufficiently clear from instances where Cassian explicitly ascribes divine authority to these utterances.¹⁴⁸ The one who prays can thus become a prophet by disclosing some aspect of God's relationship with mankind.¹⁴⁹ In at least one instance, prayer reveals a proposition about God Himself. The prayer of David, 'that holy prophet', at Ps. 102.27 demonstrates the theological point that God is changeless (*inmutabilem*).¹⁵⁰ We have had occasion to note Cassian's emphatic balance of

¹⁴⁶ Cassian, *conl* 18.15.7. Cf. *apoph* Macarius the Great 1 (PG 65.257-260): Macarius is accused of impregnating a village girl and is punished, and his innocence is revealed only when the girl is unable to deliver the baby.

¹⁴⁷ Cassian, *conl* 18.5.5-6: 'ut die sabbati uel dominico non ad percipiendam communionem sacram, sed ad prosternendum se in limine ecclesiae atque ad ueniam suppliciter postulandam matutinus occurreret.' For a general study of rites of penitence in early Christianity, see (Poschmann 1940).

¹⁴⁸ Cassian, *conl* 12.12.5: Solomon's prayer at the completion of the temple (1Kgs 8.17-19), quoting God Himself, reveals that David – and by extension any holy person – can properly be credited with good initiative *proprio motu*, so to speak; 23.18.1-2: 'Forgive us our trespasses' (Mt 6.12) is a divinely mandated prayer.

¹⁴⁹ Cassian, *conl* 3.12.2 (citing Pss. 17.5, 40.2), 13.1 (Pss. 25.5, 5.8), 15.2 (Ps. 68.28), 17 (2 Thess 2.16-7); 11.10.1 (Lk. 23.34); 13.10.1-2 (Pss. 119.112, 36); 23.17.4 (Is 6.5-7)

¹⁵⁰ Cassian, *conl* 6.14.3: 'sancti illius prophetae'

orthopraxy and orthodoxy. Once more, Cassian can be seen to co-ordinate prayerful experience and propositional knowledge.

Cassian can treat prayer as a vehicle for revelation because he recognises prayer as conversation with God.¹⁵¹ The cases we have just seen in which prayer provides theological data suffice to demonstrate that in prayer not only does the Christian address God, but God also addresses the Christian. Cassian uses three other metaphors to explain what prayer is. In the first, Cassian portrays prayer as an offering to God.¹⁵² For this Cassian looks back to scripture. Cassian reworks the Lord's admonition of Mt 5.23-24 by identifying the offering in question as prayer. In the second, Cassian insists that prayer and the fruits of prayer are gracious gifts from God.¹⁵³ This means that Cassian's teaching on prayer, along with his teaching on conversion and especially his Christology, are critical elements in his teaching on grace. Finally, there is the famous comparison of the mind to a feather.¹⁵⁴ Given the Evagrian resonance of this passage, the feather floating upward is best understood to refer to the ascent of prayer.¹⁵⁵

- The theological meaning of prayer

All of what we have seen so far is in a sense preliminary to *Conferences* Nine and Ten, in which Cassian reveals the 'inner significance' of prayer. These chapters are the culmination of the first installment of the *Conferences* and, in the view of some scholars,

¹⁵¹ Cassian, *inst* 5.35: 'quanti, inquit, o Iohannes, hora hac *Deo conloquuntur eumque in semet ipsis amplectuntur ac retinent*: et tu fraudaris tanto lumine, inertis sopore resolutus?' (emp. added)

¹⁵² Cassian, *inst* 2.10.3: 'offerre nos preces Domino uelle'; see also *inst* 8.13-14; *conl* 16.6.6, 16.

¹⁵³ Cassian, *conl* 3.12.2-13.1

¹⁵⁴ Cassian, *conl* 9.4.1-3

may even represent the conclusion of what Cassian intended to write.¹⁵⁶ In either case, these two Conferences are the only two sequential conferences dedicated to a single topic in all Cassian's works and by any standard they conclude a significant portion of his writings. These facts cue us to the significant place of prayer in his account of the monastic life. This comes as no surprise, since throughout the *Institutes* Cassian's teaching on prayer is the matrix for his presentation of the 'Eight Deadly Sins',¹⁵⁷ and consequently the monastic life itself.¹⁵⁸ Cassian explicitly says that these two conferences are meant to be the fulfilment of his earlier promise, made in the *Institutes*, to discuss the character of prayer.¹⁵⁹ When Cassian does so, his account is strikingly Origenian. For instance, Abba Isaac, who leads the discussion in Conference Nine, is probably to be identified with the priest Isaac of the Cells – an Origenian monk.¹⁶⁰ And the case of Serapion and Theophilus' paschal encyclical of 399, related at the beginning of Conference Ten, is actually a hugely important source for the Origenian perspective of that controversy.¹⁶¹ The feature of these conferences of particular interest to us will be Cassian's attempt to balance emotion and intellection in his account of prayer.

¹⁵⁵ Following (Marsili 1936), p. 98, several scholars have noted the Evagrian resonance of this passage – specifically *KG* 2.6 (Greek: (Hausherr 1939), p. 230); e.g., (Weber 1961), p. 29; (Ramsey 1997), p. 358; (Stewart 1998), p. 65; and (Degli Innocenti 2000), p. 32.

¹⁵⁶ See (Ramsey 1997), pp. 8, 397-8, basing his arguments on Cassian, *conl* 9.1 and *conl* 2 pref 2. This claim is controversial, chiefly because Cassian promises to discuss certain themes that are not addressed in the first ten *Conferences*. Granted that, it is still significant that *Conferences* 9 and 10 are the only two sequential conferences dedicated to the same subject; and that they treat a subject that is the pinnacle of Cassian's spiritual teaching: unceasing prayer (*conl* 10.9.1-10.14.3).

¹⁵⁷ Cassian, *inst* 7.10 (avarice); 8.2, 14, 22 (anger); 9.1, 11 (sadness; see (Weber 1961), p. 58 for parallels in Evagrius); 11.3-4, 10.1-2 (vainglory); 12.6.2, 14.3 (pride)

¹⁵⁸ Cassian, *inst* 12.16: we accomplish perfection by 'ieiuniis, uigiliis, orationibus, contritioni cordis et corporis operam dantes'.

¹⁵⁹ Cassian, *conl* 9.1

¹⁶⁰ (Stewart 1998), pp. 136-7; (Guy 1937-1995)

¹⁶¹ The major primary sources are Jerome, *epp* 82-100, (Labourt 1954-1955); Shenouda, *c Orig*, (Orlandi 1985); *u Aphou*, (Drioton 1915-1917) – though interpretations of this text vary dramatically (some treat it as evidence for anthropomorphism, e.g., (Clark 1992), pp. 51-64; but others have serious reservations, e.g., (Florovsky 1975); (Gould 1992); (Rubenson 1999), pp.334-336); Socrates, *HE* 6.7-13 (PG 67.684-704); Sozomen, *HE* 8.11-13 (PG 67.1544-1549); Palladius, *u Chrys* 6.16-7.118, (Malingrey 1988), 1.126-154;

In *Conference* Nine, Abba Isaac forcefully asserts the pre-eminent importance of that ‘more pure and sincere prayer’ which, once it has been achieved, effects the transformation of the monk’s life. Adhering to Origenian tradition,¹⁶² Isaac teaches that for the monk who has attained this level of prayer, everything he does is prayer: ‘For when the sense of the mind has been absorbed, so to speak, by this purity and remade from its earthly corrosion to a spiritual and even angelic likeness, whatever is received in it, whatever it touches, whatever it does will be the most pure and sincere prayer.’¹⁶³ Perhaps out of concern that prayer not be reduced to an epiphenomenon, Germanus asks Isaac to explain the quality of this prayer, claiming he does not know what sort of prayer can be overlaid on every activity.¹⁶⁴ To this, Isaac responds that there are many types of prayer, which he distinguishes in terms of the purity and condition of the mind of the one praying.¹⁶⁵ He bases his claim about the multiplicity of prayer on scriptural testimony: ‘I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men’.¹⁶⁶ He explains each term separately.

Orosius, *err Prisc et Orig* and Augustine, *c Prisc et Orig*, (Daur 1985); Sulpicius Severus *dial* 1.6-7, (Halm 1866), pp. 157-159; ps.-Agathonicus of Tarsus, *De fide*, (Crum 1915), pp. 21-25; Cyril, *adu anthr* (PG 76.1065-1132); Rufinus, *adult lib Orig, apol ad Anastasium, c Hier*, (Simonetti 1961)

¹⁶² Cf. Origen, *orat* 12.2, (Koetschau 1899), 1.324.25-325.3: «ἀδιαλείπτως» δὲ προσεύχεται, καὶ τῶν ἔργων τῆς ἀρετῆς ἢ τῶν ἐντολῶν τῶν ἐπιτελουμένων εἰς εὐχῆς ἀναλαμβανομένων μέρος, ὃ συνάπτων τοῖς δέουσιν ἔργοις τὴν εὐχὴν καὶ τῇ εὐχῇ τὰς πρεπούσας πράξεις. οὕτω γὰρ μόνως τὸ «ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεσθε» ἐκδέξασθαι δυνάμεθα ὡς δυνατόν ὃν εἰρημένον, εἰ πάντα τὸν βίον τοῦ ἁγίου μίαν συναπτομένην μεγάλην εἴποιμεν εὐχὴν...

¹⁶³ Cassian, *conl* 9.6.5: ‘Hac enim puritate, si dici potest, sensu mentis absorto ac de terreno situ ad spiritalem atque angelicam similitudinem reformato quidquid in se receperit, quidquid tractauerit, quidquid egerit, purissima ac sincerissima erit oratio.’

¹⁶⁴ Cassian, *conl* 9.7.4

¹⁶⁵ Cassian, *conl* 9.8.1-3

¹⁶⁶ 1 Tim 2.1; Cassian, *conl* 9.9.1-14. He will also find evidence for this four-fold distinction from the Gospels (9.17.1-3) and Phil. 4.6 (9.17.4). This is a classic Origenian treatment of the issue; see Origen, *orat* 14.2-6, (Koetschau 1899), 1.330-333; cf. (Weber 1961), pp. 63-64.

‘Supplication is an imploring or petition for sins, by which anyone who is moved to compunction beseeches forgiveness for his wrongdoings, whether past or present.’¹⁶⁷ Awareness of our past sins, committed in knowledge or in ignorance, and sorrow on account of them is an important theme for Cassian.¹⁶⁸ ‘Prayers are that by which we offer or vow anything to God, which in Greek is called *εὐχή*, that is, vow.’¹⁶⁹ The examples provided of this sort of vow are monastic renunciations, all flowing from repentance. ‘Intercessions are put in third place, which we are accustomed to send up even for others, while we are established in fervour of spirit, earnestly asking for our dear ones or the peace of the whole world and, that I might speak with the words of the Apostle himself, when “we make supplications for all people, for kings and for all in authority.”’¹⁷⁰ Peter Brown’s landmark work on the social role of the holy man has

¹⁶⁷ Cassian, *conl* 9.11: ‘Obsecratio inploratio est seu petitio pro peccatis, qua uel pro praesentibus uel pro praeteritis admissis suis unusquisque compunctus ueniam deprecatur’; cf. *conl* 20.6.1-2, 12.2.

¹⁶⁸ Cassian, *conl* 22.11.5: Christ’s prayer that the cup might pass (Mt 26.38-9) was indeed sorrowful, but this sorrow had nothing of sin in it. *conl* 23.5.8-9: Again, no one is sinless. (Theonas appends three descriptions of sin during prayer: ‘Quid tantum spiritus umquam potuit retinere feruorem, ut non interdum lubricis cogitationibus ab ipsa quoque orationis intentione translatus repente de caelestibus ad terrena conrueret? Quid nostrum, ut cetera peruagationum tempora praetermittam, non illo etiam momento, quo deo supplicans ad sublimia erigit mentem, quodam stupore Conlapsus etiam per id uel inuitus offendat, per quod sperabat ueniam delictorum? [...] Quis tam familiaris deo tamque coniunctus, qui apostolicum illud imperium, quo sine intermissione orare nos praecipit, uel uno die se gaudeat exsecutum?’); *conl* 23.6.2-4: *ibid.* *conl* 23.7.2: *ibid.*: ‘... nec de emissa tardius uel tepidius oratione deflemus, nec reputamus ad culpam cur psallentibus uel orantibus nobis aliquid aliud quam ipsa oratio uel psalmus occurrerit...’ *conl* 23.16.1: Theonas attributes these problems to the body of death: ‘Hoc est corpus mortis, quod a caelesti eos intuitu retrahens ad terrena deducit, quod psallentes eos atque in oratione prostratos uel humanas efficies uel sermones uel negotia uel actus facit superfluos retractare.’ *conl* 23.18.1-2: ‘Forgive us our trespasses’ (Mt 6.12) is a divinely mandated prayer.

¹⁶⁹ Cassian, *conl* 9.12.1: ‘Orationes sunt quibus aliquid offerimus seu uouemus deo, quod Graece dicitur *εὐχή*, id est uotum.’ See (Marsili 1936), pp. 98-100, fn. 2.

¹⁷⁰ Cassian, *conl* 9.13: ‘Tertio loco ponuntur postulationes, quas pro aliis quoque, dum sumus in feruore spiritus constituti, solemus emittere, uel pro caris scilicet nostris uel pro totius mundi pace poscentes, et ut ipsius apostoli uerbis eloquar cum pro omnibus hominibus, pro regibus et omnibus qui in sublimitate sunt supplicamus.’ Prayer is also a way of beseeching blessings from God for oneself. Some examples include the following. *Diuturnis precibus*, Abba Machetes obtained from God the grace of not nodding off during conferences (*inst* 5.29). The illiterate Abba Theodore prays for illumination regarding Scripture (*inst* 5.33); cf. Cassian’s description of Theodore to his Evagrian ideal stated at *conl* 14.8.1-11.5. *conl* 13.7.4: Abba Chaeremon address the problem of asking God for bad things.

drawn attention to the great desirability of saintly intercession.¹⁷¹ This was not limited to the socially marginal, as Cassian attests when he relates Abba Abraham's tale of the great trust placed, even by potentates and emperors, in the prayers of Abba John of Lycopolis.¹⁷² 'Thanksgiving is put in fourth place, which the mind returns to the Lord in ineffable transports, either when it recalls the past blessings of God or when it contemplates the present ones, or when looks to the future for the great things God has prepared for them that love Him.'¹⁷³ We can see in this description a glimmer of the emotional richness Cassian habitually attributes to prayer.

So that there is no confusion, Isaac insists that all the types of prayer are appropriate for all people at any given time. All of them can give rise to what Isaac designates 'pure and most fervent supplications' and 'that fiery prayer which can be neither related nor expressed by the human mouth.'¹⁷⁴ Isaac gives a striking account of wordless prayers by way of the Spirit groaning within us, worth quoting at length.

Nevertheless sometimes the mind, which progresses to that true condition of purity and has already begun to be rooted in it, conceiving all these things at one and the same time and flying around all them like a kind of incomprehensible and most greedy flame, is accustomed to pour out prayers of purest vigour to God – which the Spirit Himself, intervening with unutterable groans that we do not know, sends to God, at that moment in time conceiving and ineffably pouring forth in supplications such things as I would not say they proceed from the mouth, but the very things cannot even to be recollected by the mind at another time.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ (Brown 1971), pp. 96-103; (Brown 1998), pp. 54-80; (Brown 1982a); (Brown 1982b); and (Brown 1995), pp. 55-78

¹⁷² Cassian, *conl* 24.26.17. St. John of Lycopolis, the celebrated seer of Thebaïd, was well connected with the Origenists of the desert. Evagrius and Ammonios, one of the Tall Brothers, sought him out for clarification on an abstruse theological point; see Evagrius, *ant* 6.16, (Frankenberg 1912), p. 524. See (Sauget 1961-1969), (Vivian forthcoming).

¹⁷³ Cassian, *conl* 9.14: 'Quarto deinde loco gratiarum actiones ponuntur, quas mens, uel cum praeterita dei recolit beneficia uel cum praesentia contemplatur, seu cum in futurum quae et quanta praeparauerit deus his qui diligunt eum prospicit, per ineffabiles excessus domino refert.'

¹⁷⁴ Cassian, *conl* 9.15.1: 'puras ac feruentissimas supplicationes; illam ignitam et quae ore hominum nec comprehendi nec exprimi potest orationem.' See (Marsili 1936), pp. 34-5.

¹⁷⁵ Cassian, *conl* 9.15.2: 'Nonnumquam tamen mens, quae in illum uerum puritatis proficit adfectum atque in eo iam coeperit radicari, solet haec omnia simul pariterque concipiens atque in modum cuiusdam

In keeping with his egalitarian disposition (God, after all, is no respecter of persons), Isaac does not restrict this intense prayer to the experienced only. Even preoccupation with the forgiveness of sins – the lowest form of prayer – can lead to these exalted heights. This is, however, no justification for complacency: efforts must be made to advance.¹⁷⁶

Turning from this, Isaac offers an exegesis of the Our Father.¹⁷⁷ He starts it by drawing out the intimacy implied by addressing God as ‘Father’: “And so a more sublime and lofty kind succeeds this level of supplications, which is shaped by the contemplation of God alone and the ardour of love, through which the mind, loosened and thrown back in love of Him, most intimately and with special piety speaks to God as to its own father.”¹⁷⁸ Throughout Isaac’s explication of that text, the superlatives and emotional descriptions occur quite densely. It is therefore all the more interesting that Isaac links this sublime description of ineffable prayer to the vision of the divine light.¹⁷⁹ With its central emphasis on the illuminated mind, his teaching therefore draws the mind as well as the heart into the description of prayer as a transport. We will return to this juxtaposition of mental and emotional imagery further in the assessment of Cassian’s mysticism. For now, let us consider Isaac’s account of this level of prayer.

So then this prayer [...] leads His familiars through a loftier grade to that fiery prayer which is known or experienced by very few, but (that I may speak more precisely) is ineffable. I do not say that this prayer,

inconprehensibilis ac rapacissimae flammae cuncta peruolitans ineffabiles ad deum preces purissimi uigoris effundere, quas ipse spiritus interpellans gemitibus inenarrabilibus ignorantibus nobis emittit ad deum, tanta scilicet in illius horae momento concipiens et ineffabiliter in supplicatione profundens, quanta non dicam ore percurrere, sed ne ipsa quidem mente ualeat alio tempore recordari.’

¹⁷⁶ Cassian, *conl* 9.15.3-9.16

¹⁷⁷ Cassian, *conl* 9.18-24

¹⁷⁸ Cassian, *conl* 9.18.1: ‘Haec itaque supplicationum genera sublimior adhuc status ac praecelsior subsequetur, qui contemplatione dei solius et caritatis ardore formatur, per quem mens in illius dilectionem resoluta atque reiecta familiarissime deo uelut patri proprio peculiari pietate conloquitur.’

¹⁷⁹ Cassian therefore did advocate ‘Evagrian light-mysticism’, *pace* (Chadwick 1950), p. 148.

which transcends all human understanding, is not distinguished by any sound of the voice or movement of the tongue or pronunciation of words. Rather it is this prayer that the mind, enlightened by the infusion of that heavenly light, does not describe by constricted, human eloquence; but, with its senses gathered together, it abundantly gives forth as it were from some most plentiful fountain and ineffably talks to God. In that most fleeting moment of time, it produces so many things that the mind, once it turns back upon itself, is incapable of speaking readily about them, either eloquently or summarily.¹⁸⁰

This brings Isaac to the end of his first discourse. He concludes it by listing some of the experiences that can intensify prayers and provoke compunction. These include verses sung from the Psalter; the modulation of the cantor's voice; exhortations and conferences; someone else's lapse; and the recollection of 'the coolness and sloth of our minds'.¹⁸¹ Isaac further says that there are three reactions to this sort of prayer: shouts of unspeakable joy (*clamores quosdam intolerabilis gaudii*); unutterable groans (*gemitibus inenarrabilibus*); and pouring forth tears (*lacrimarum euaporatione*).¹⁸² It would seem that Isaac is content to leave things there. But the intrepid pilgrims are not satisfied. Germanus attests that he has experienced such things.¹⁸³ Knowing that the experience is fleeting, though, he expresses great regret that he cannot spontaneously regain it.¹⁸⁴ Isaac therefore turns to the aetiology of tears,¹⁸⁵ and makes the significant observation that it is unwise to attempt to force tears, not least because such preoccupation tends to

¹⁸⁰ Cassian, *conl* 9.25: 'Haec igitur oratio [...] domesticos suos [...] ad illam igneam ac perpaucis cognitam uel expertam, immo ut proprius dixerim ineffabilem orationem gradu eminentiore perducit, quae omnem transcendens humanum sensum nullo non dicam sono uocis nec linguae motu nec ulla uerborum pronuntiatione distinguitur, sed quam mens infusione caelestis illius luminis inlustrata non humanis atque angustis designat eloquiis, sed conglobatis sensibus uelut de fonte quodam copiosissimo effundit ubertim atque ineffabiliter eructat ad deum, tanta promens in illo breuissimo temporis puncto, quanta nec eloqui facile nec percurrere mens in semet ipsam reuersa praeualeat.' (Cf. 5.35.) This passage will be discussed below.

¹⁸¹ Cassian, *conl* 9.26.1-2: 'tepor ac somnolentia nostrarum mentium'

¹⁸² Cassian, *conl* 9.27

¹⁸³ Cassian, *conl* 9.28.1

¹⁸⁴ Cassian, *conl* 9.28.2

¹⁸⁵ Cassian, *conl* 9.29.1-3

distraction.¹⁸⁶ This response subtly but decisively devalues the emotional response by showing that tears and compunction have no intrinsic value.

In this context, Isaac's introduction of two otherwise unattested apophthegmata of Antony the Great's takes on a new significance. The first relates how, in transport of mind, Antony prayed throughout the night and chided the sun when it arose: 'Why do you impede me, O sun, who have been praying until now, so as to draw me from the glory of that true light?'¹⁸⁷ Yet again, Isaac caps his description of mental transport with the metaphor of divine light¹⁸⁸ and thereby checks the affective aspect of prayer with an intellectual corrective. The second apophthegm is a 'heavenly and superhuman statement' that is 'on the end of prayer': 'It is not a true prayer in which the monk knows himself or the very thing that he prays.'¹⁸⁹ Clearly, Isaac does not uncritically endorse intellection. Instead, he maintains a precarious balance between a two-fold human response, intellectual and emotional, to the encounter with Almighty God – Who transcends both human intellect and human emotion.

Isaac thus indicates the relative value of both emotional and intellectual responses in prayer. Recalling Our Lord's teaching, 'Therefore I say unto you, whatever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them', Isaac then urges Germanus and Cassian to pray without hesitation or doubting but with

¹⁸⁶ Cassian, *conl* 9.30.1-2. See (Špidlík 1988), pp. 273-274; (Adnès 1937-1995); (Lot-Borodine 1981); (Gómez 1961).

¹⁸⁷ Cassian, *conl* 9.31: 'Quid me impedis, sol, qui ad hoc iam oreris, ut me ab huius ueri luminis abstrahas claritate?'

¹⁸⁸ I follow Souter in taking Cassian's *claritas* in this way, (Souter 1949), p. 54. Cf. Athanasius, *u Ant* 10.1-4, (Bartelink 1994), pp. 162-164, where the light of Christ plays an important role in Antony's ascetic progress.

¹⁸⁹ Cassian, *conl* 9.31: 'cuius etiam haec quoque est super orationis fine caelestis et plus quam humana sententia : non est, inquit, perfecta oratio, in qua se monachus uel hoc ipsum quod orat intellegit.' Cf. *conl* 3.7.3, 10.6.1-3; and Evagrius, *In ps* 126.2γ; cf. *In pss* 38.5γ, 138.7γ, 144.3β; KG 1.71, 3.63, 3.88, (Guillaumont 1962), pp. 53, 123, 135; *prak* 87, (Guillaumont 1971), p. 678; *orat* 117.

confidence.¹⁹⁰ Germanus then stipulates that this can only occur from purity of conscience – which means trouble for those lacking such a conscience.¹⁹¹ Because this remark stems from personal concern, Isaac reassured Germanus by reminding him that ‘evangelic or prophetic witnesses attest that there are diverse reasons for being favourably heard, in accordance with the diverse and varied states of souls.’¹⁹² He draws his list of these states from Scripture, so as to include agreement,¹⁹³ faith as a mustard seed,¹⁹⁴ repetition,¹⁹⁵ almsgiving,¹⁹⁶ repentance,¹⁹⁷ fasting¹⁹⁸ and distress.¹⁹⁹ Since the Lord taught us to pray, ‘Thy will be done’, not ‘my will be done’, Isaac implies that obedience also belongs on this list.²⁰⁰ We might finally add integrity.²⁰¹

Having intimated the proper balance of thought and feeling in prayer, explicated the quintessential Christian prayer, and completed the teaching on ceaseless prayer, Isaac concludes his discourse with a few practical points. He tells Germanus and Cassian that prayers ought to be frequent and brief.²⁰² He also resumes talking of prayer as a sacrifice. Whereas previously Cassian did this in terms of the New Testament, here Isaac brings out the same teaching about prayer in terms of the Psalter.²⁰³ Evening synaxis and rest

¹⁹⁰ Cassian, *conl* 9.32

¹⁹¹ Cassian, *conl* 9.33

¹⁹² Cassian, *conl* 9.34.1: ‘Diuersas exauditionum causas esse secundum animarum diuersum ac uarium statum euangelica siue prophetica testantur eloquia.’

¹⁹³ Ibid; cf. Mt 18.19

¹⁹⁴ Ibid; cf. Mt 17.20

¹⁹⁵ Cassian, *conl* 9.34.2; cf. Lk 11.8

¹⁹⁶ Ibid; cf. Sir 29.12

¹⁹⁷ Ibid; cf. Is 58.6

¹⁹⁸ Cassian, *conl* 9.34.3

¹⁹⁹ Ibid; cf. Ps 120.1 and Ex 22.22, 27

²⁰⁰ Cassian, *conl* 9.34.9-10

²⁰¹ Cf. Cassian, *conl* 9.35.1-3

²⁰² Cassian, *conl* 9.36.1

²⁰³ Isaac begins with Pss. 51.17, 19; 50.23 and 66.15, and concludes with Ps 141.2 (‘Let my prayer arise...’)

follow the conference.²⁰⁴ Curiously, though we have just been told that spiritual conferences can elicit profound prayers,²⁰⁵ Cassian gives no indication that Isaac's conference prompted such a reaction in him or Germanus.

Cassian begins *Conference* 10 with the famous anecdote about Serapion, a pious but extremely simple old monk. After sketching the situation at Skete when Theophilus' Paschal encyclical of 399 arrived,²⁰⁶ Cassian describes Serapion as a man 'of most ancient austerity and altogether perfected in asceticism' – but, alas, no more than that.²⁰⁷ Cassian alludes to the problem in a later description of Serapion, when he calls him 'a man of such age and perfected in so many virtues, erring only by ignorance and rustic simplicity.'²⁰⁸ That last clause is especially important, for it shows precisely where the problems enter in: despite his exemplary behaviour, Serapion is altogether unaccomplished in spiritual contemplation.²⁰⁹ Serapion's piety depends upon crassly imagining God in physical form.

Naturally, the revelation that an old pillar of the community is in error deeply unsettled the brethren, so the presence of a clever deacon named Photinus, who was ready to correct Serapion's misapprehensions, was nothing less than a godsend. Photinus undertakes Serapion's re-education by offering the Catholic interpretation of Gen. 1.26.

²⁰⁴ Cassian, *conl* 9.36.3

²⁰⁵ Cassian, *conl* 9.26.2

²⁰⁶ Cassian, *conl* 10.1-2.3. There is a proliferation of secondary literature on the anecdote about Abba Sarapion, primarily because it bears witness to Cassian's perspective on the 'Anthropomorphite-Origenist' quarrel and consequently provides historical information to complement other early sources. Some important secondary works are (Carruthers 1998), pp. 69-81 (a brilliant discussion that distinguishes the doctrinal and cognitive meanings of *similitudo* and *imago*); (Desprez 1998), pp. 281-3; (Festugière 1961), pp. 83-91; (Guillaumont 1962), pp. 59-80 (esp. 59-61); (Lehart 1912-); (Stewart 1998), pp. 86-90, 95-99; (Studer 1983). Now established as a classic of sorts, (Clark 1992) is a thorough overview of the events – though discretion is needed in the case of her theological conjectures; see (Sheridan 1996). She treats the relevant material on p. 66.

²⁰⁷ Cassian, *conl* 10.3.1: 'antiquissimae districtiois atque in actuali disciplina per omnia consummatus'

²⁰⁸ Cassian, *conl* 10.3.4: 'uirum tantae antiquitatis tantisque uirtutibus consummatum, inperitia sola et simplicitate rusticitatis errantem'

His exposition is foundational for what Cassian will say about prayer, so it is best quoted at length.

He explained that the image and likeness of God is treated by all the princes of the churches, not according to the base sound of the letter, but spiritually. And he proved with a fulsome speech and many examples from the Scriptures that it could not be that anything human of this sort could befall that immense and incomprehensible and invisible majesty on which account it could be circumscribed by arrangement and likeness, which to be sure is by nature incorporeal and homogenous and simple and which cannot be apprehended by the eyes or judged by the mind. When this had happened, the old man was drawn to the faith of the Catholic tradition, moved by the many and most compelling arguments of the most learned man.²¹⁰

Serapion was thus persuaded by this account and renounced the pernicious anthropomorphic habit of ‘circumscribing the majesty of God’. But when everyone arose to pray to the Lord for His graciousness, Serapion collapses in grief, unable to pray.

But at prayer the old man was confused in mind, when he perceived that the anthropomorphic image of the Godhead that he was accustomed to set forth for himself at prayer had been abolished from his heart – so that pouring forth bitterest tears and frequent sobs, prostrate on the ground he proclaimed with a most mighty wail, ‘Woe is me! They have taken from me my God, Whom I would now grasp – but have not; and Whom I would address or supplicate – but know no longer.’²¹¹

Cassian expresses no sympathy for Serapion in his pathetic state. Instead, Cassian and Germanus stress the seriousness of Serapion’s ignorance: ‘by the fault of this ignorance not only has he wholly lost the labours which he so commendably accomplished for fifty years in this desert, but even incurred the judgement of perpetual

²⁰⁹ On the Evagrian distinction between *theoria* and *praktikè* in Cassian, see (Marsili 1936), pp. 106-107.

²¹⁰ Cassian, *conl* 10.3.3: ‘Cumque ille non secundum humilem litterae sonum, sed spiritaliter imaginem dei ac similitudinem tradi ab uniuersis ecclesiarum principibus explanaret idque copioso sermone ac plurimis scripturarum testimoniis adprobasset, nec posse in illam inmensam et inconprehensibilem atque inuisibilem maiestatem aliquid huiusmodi cadere quod humanus conpositione ualeat ac similitudine circumscribi, quippe quae incorporea et inconposita simplexque natura sit quaeque sicut (oculis deprehendi, ita mente) non ualeat aestimari, tandem senex multis ac ualidissimis doctissimi uiri adsertionibus motus ad fidem catholicae traditionis adtractus est.’ On the Evagrian resonance, see (Weber 1961), p. 59.

²¹¹ Cassian, *conl* 10.3.4-5: ‘ita est in oratione senex mente confusus, eo quod illam anthropomorphon imaginem deitatis, quam proponere sibi in oratione consueuerat, aboleri de suo corde sentiret, ut in amarissimos fletus crebrosque signultus repente prorumpens in terramque prostratus cum heiulatu ualidissimo proclamaret: heu me miserum! tulerunt a me deum meum, et quem p̄unc teneam non habeo uel quem adorem aut interpellem iam nescio.’

death'.²¹² They echo, perhaps unknowingly, a sentiment Antony the Great expressed just as trenchantly in his letter to the brethren at Arsinoë:

Truly, little children, I also want you to recognise this: many there are who have endured great struggle in this most holy way of life, but lack of discernment killed them. Truly, little children, it is no wonder that if, to the extent you neglect yourselves and do not discern your own works, to that extent you fall into the grasp of the devil, and thinking you are close to God, and expecting a strong light, we are overtaken by shadows.²¹³

Isaac's judgement is likewise unsparing – he equates anthropomorphism with idolatry. '...Which will be detested as pagan blasphemy if one has been established with Catholic dogmas and so he will attain to that purest condition of prayer, which not only does not mix any effigy of divinity or bodily figures (which is scandalous even to say!) in its supplications, but will not admit into itself any memory at all of a saying or appearance of a deed or shape of any kind whatsoever.'²¹⁴ A good deal more than ascetic purification is needed. We have already noted that right practice is foundational for right belief. With the tale of Serapion, the paradox becomes clear – right practice is unsustainable, therefore ultimately impossible, without right belief. The two are mutually reinforcing and constitute, so to speak, a virtuous circle.

It is with this in mind that we should take Abba Isaac's renewed account of purification. The critical addition he makes to his former discussion is a new focus that is decidedly Christocentric. '... Those alone behold His divinity with purest eyes, who,

²¹² Cassian, *conl* 10.4.1: '... eum labores tantos, quos per quinquaginta annos in hac heremo tam laudabiliter exegit, ignorantiae huius uitio non solum penitus perdidisse, sed etiam perpetuae mortis incurrisse discrimen.'

²¹³ Antony, *ep* 6.106-107, translated from Valerius de Sarasio's Latin (PG 40.987). On the letters generally, see (Rubenson 1995b); I follow his internal numbering of the letters. I have explored some further parallels between Antony and Evagrius, but also Cassian, in (Casiday forthcoming-a).

²¹⁴ Cassian, *conl* 10.5.3: 'Quam tamen si quis fuerit catholicis dogmatibus Institutus ut gentilem blasphemiam detestabitur et ita ad illam orationis purissimam perueniet qualitatem, quae non solum nullam diuinitatis effigiem nec liniamenta corporea, quod dictu quoque nefas est, in sua supplicatione miscebit, sed ne ullam quidem in se memoriam dicti cuiusquam uel facti speciem seu formam cuiuslibet characteris admittet.' See (Codina 1966), pp. 89-90, 103.

ascending from base and earthly works and thoughts, have sat with Him in the highest mountain of solitude, which, free from all earthly thoughts and hidden from the tumult of passions and the contamination of all faults, exalted by the purest faith and eminence of virtues, reveals the glory of His face and the image of His glory to those who deserve to gaze upon Him with the pure gaze of the soul.²¹⁵ In this passage, Isaac briefly makes a number of significant points, which can be appreciated in the context of the Evagrian teaching on prayer we have already discussed. We shall take in turn.

First, pure eyes see Christ's divinity. To belabour an obvious point, if pure eyes see Christ's divinity, then there is an object that they see. Without egregious interpretive acrobatics, there is no way to extrapolate imagelessness, pure and simple, from talk of seeing something. Consequently, there is no basis for attributing to Isaac or to Cassian the doctrine of 'mental iconoclasm' that Elizabeth Clark has dubiously attributed to Evagrius.²¹⁶ Second, Isaac specifically mentions the face of Christ. In the Evagrian tradition, Christ is Himself the face of God.²¹⁷ By including this reference, Cassian has secured the mediating role of Christ within Christian prayer to a greater extent than Evagrius had, using Evagrian terminology all the while. Third, Isaac refers to Christ's 'glory' or 'brightness.' Here we should detect an allusion to Evagrian light-mysticism.²¹⁸ In linking this light to Christ, Cassian has subtly modified the position of Evagrius once again, for Evagrius associated it with the Holy Trinity. Fourth, in the next section Isaac

²¹⁵ Cassian, *conl* 10.6.1-3: '... illi soli purissimis oculis diuinitatem ipsius speculantur, qui de humilibus ac terrenis operibus et cogitationibus ascendentes cum illo secedunt in excelso solitudinis monte, qui liber ab omnium terrenarum cogitationum ac perturbationum tumultu et a cunctorum uitiorum permixtione secretus, fide purissima ac uirtutum eminentia sublimatus, gloriam uultus eius et claritatis reuelat imaginem his qui merentur eum mundis animae obtutibus intueri.'

²¹⁶ (Clark 1992), pp. 4, 75-76, 84. Elsewhere I have developed my criticism of Prof. Clark's claim with respect to Evagrius: see (Casiday forthcoming-b).

²¹⁷ E.g., Evagrius, *in Ps* 79.88'

²¹⁸ See fn. 179.

clarifies what he means by the phrase ‘cogitationibus ascendentes cum illo secedunt in excelso solitudinis monte’: he is referring to the Transfiguration.²¹⁹ The Transfiguration is the central scriptural image for Isaac’s account and it is therefore the focal point of Cassian’s teaching about prayer.²²⁰ His emphasis on this is more in keeping with Origenian tradition than is Evagrius’ fleeting reference to it.²²¹ Fifth, the teaching is profoundly indebted to Evagrius’ ascetic teaching for its metaphor of an ascent that results in *apatheia*: the ascent of Mt. Tabor according to Isaac is nothing other than the life of ascetic struggle described at length by Evagrius. From these five points, we can appreciate how complex the relationship between Isaac and Cassian’s account and Evagrius’ account is. All the terms of reference are common to both; even the differences are expressed in decidedly Evagrian language. For these reasons, the difference between the two descriptions of prayer is best considered evidence for natural development within the tradition.

In what follows, Isaac continues and develops the christocentrism evident in his account of the Transfiguration.²²² Isaac teaches that Our Lord is ‘the very font of

²¹⁹ At *u Mos* 2.240-251, (Daniélou 1955), pp. 109-113, Gregory of Nyssa indicates that Moses met Christ on Mt. Sinai. The passage can be profitably taken as a meditation on the wonder of God taking on limitations. Gregory sets the stage for Isaac to state baldly that it was Christ who appeared to Moses, but Isaac develops the meditation by explicitly comparing Sinai to Tabor.

²²⁰ Cassian, *conl* 10.6.3

²²¹ See Origen, *Cels* 2.64, 4.16, 6.77, (Koetschau 1899), 1.185-186, 1.285-286, 2.146-149; *FrMt* 357, 361-65, (Klostermann 1941), pp. 152-153, 154-157; *HGn* 1.7 (Baehrens 1920), pp. 8-10; Basil, *in Ps* 44.5 (PG 29.400); Gregory of Nyssa, *hom 1 in Cant, passim*, (Langerbeck 1960); Denys, *dju nom* 1.4, (Suchla 1990), pp. 112-115; Maximus, *amb* 10.17, 31 (PG 91.1126-1128, 1160-1169; I follow Prof. Louth’s internal numbering; see also his discussion of this material: (Louth 1996), pp. 44-47, 70-72), *cap theol* 1.97 (PG 90.1121-1124). See also ps-Macarius, *hom* 8.3, 15.38, cf. 4.12, 12.12, (Dörries 1964), pp. 78-79, 149-150, 36-37, 113. See (Crouzel 1961), pp. 470-4; (Ménard 1972); (McGuckin 1987).

²²² Codina’s ‘Conclusion: Los cuatros sentidos de la Escritura’, (Codina 1966), pp. 105-115, compares the Transfiguration on Tabor with Origenian hermeneutics. He notes Cassian’s fidelity both to the literal sense of Scripture and to the Incarnation (p. 107) and that Cassian’s interest in the spiritual significance of the Bible does not abolish its literal significance; instead, it gives form to it (p. 111; cf. p. 113). In the end, Codina persuasively concludes, p. 112, ‘La oración evangélica y la teoría evagriana quendan integradas en la tropología.’

inviolable sanctity.’²²³ By withdrawing into the desert or the mountain, He sets an example for our prayer – which should be made ‘from the pure and whole feeling of the heart’.²²⁴ Thus, ‘from all the disturbance and confusion of the crowds we should likewise withdraw, so that tarrying in this body we might be able at least in some measure to prepare ourselves for the likeness of His blessedness which is promised to the Saints in the future, and that for us God may be all in all.’²²⁵ Isaac states that, when this has transpired, Christ’s own prayer will be fulfilled and the love of God – note, God the Holy Trinity²²⁶ – will transform everything so that ‘God will be all in all’.²²⁷

In practical terms, this means that God will permeate every aspect of our lives. It is worth quoting Isaac here *in extenso*:

So it shall be, when our every love, desire, eagerness, effort and thought, all that we live, speak, breathe will be God. And that unity which is now the Father’s with the Son and the Son’s with the Father will have transfused our perception and mind, that is, so that just as with a sincere and pure and indissoluble love He loves us, we too will be joined to Him by perpetual and inseparable delight, so linked to Him, to be sure, that whatever we breathe, understand, say would be God. In Him, I say, we shall accomplish the end about which we spoke earlier, the which the Lord besought that it would be fulfilled in us when He prayed, ‘That they all may be one just as We are one, I in them and You in Me, that they too may be perfected in one’ (Jn. 17.22-3), and again, ‘Father, I wish that those whom You have give Me may themselves be with Me where I am’ (Jn. 17.24).²²⁸

²²³ Cassian, *conl* 10.6.4: ‘ipse fons inuiolabilis sanctitatis’

²²⁴ Ibid.: ‘puro et integro cordis affectu’

²²⁵ Cassian, *conl* 10.6.4: ‘ab omni inquietudine et confusione turbaram similiter secedamus, ut in hoc corpore conmorantes ad similitudinem quandam illius beatitudinis, quae in futuro repromittitur sanctis, uel ex parte aliqua nos aptare possimus, sitque nobis omnia in omnibus deus.’

²²⁶ Pace (Stewart 1998), p. 97; the curious phrase, repeated twice, that ‘omne quod/quidquid *spiramus* erit deus’ involves the Holy Spirit in this process without radically departing from the Scriptural basis for a passage that does not mention the Spirit.

²²⁷ Cassian, *conl* 10.7.1-2

²²⁸ Cassian, *conl* 10.7.2: ‘Quod ita fiet, cum omnis amor, omne desiderium, omne studium, omnis conatus, omnis cogitatio nostra, omne quod uiuimus, quod loquimur, quod spiramus, deus erit, illaque unitas quae nunc est patris cum filio et filii cum patre in nostrum fuerit sensum mentemque transfusa, id est ut quemadmodum nos ille sincera et pura atque indissolubili diligit caritate, nos quoque ei perpetua et inseparabili dilectione iungamur, ita scilicet eidem copulati, ut quidquid spiramus, quidquid intellegimus, quidquid loquimur, deus sit, in illum, inquam, peruenientes quem praediximus finem, quem idem dominus orans in nobis optat inpleri : ut omnes sint unum sicut nos unum sumus, ego in eis et tu in me, ut sint et ipsi consummati in unum, et iterum : pater, quos dedisti mihi, uolo ut ubi ego sum et ipsi sint mecum.’

Consequently, all things will become prayer: 'Here, I say, is the end of every perfection: that the mind, refined from every carnal weakness, may be elevated daily to the spiritual realm until its entire way of life and the entire will of the heart are made a single and continuous prayer.'²²⁹ Finally, Isaac again refers to the 'image of future blessedness' (*imaginem futurae beatitudinis*) available 'in this body' (*in hoc corpore*) as a 'foretaste of the pledge of that heavenly life and glory in this vessel' (*quodammodo arram caelestis illius conuersationis et gloriae incipiat in hoc uasculo praegustare*) – a reversal of the anthropomorphic tendency to refer our bodily condition back upon God. By Christ Jesus and through prayer, God's holiness transforms our worldliness.²³⁰

Next, Germanus explains to Isaac their situation and asks for advice, doing so in a way that is particularly striking. He states matter-of-factly: 'We plainly suspect these are the principles at stake: first, that we should know by what meditation God is held or contemplated; then that we should prevail in unchangeably maintaining this very substance, whatever it is, since we also do not doubt that it stands out as the summit of all perfection.'²³¹ It is nothing short of stunning that Germanus, who with Cassian has just been told the cautionary tale of Serapion's fall, makes bold to talk of God being grasped and contemplated. His daring language does not end with this, for Germanus goes on to articulate their need for a technique by which this 'memory of God' may be maintained.

²²⁹ Cassian, *conl* 10.7.3: 'Hic, inquam, finis totius perfectionis est, ut eo usque extenuata mens ab omni situ carnali ad spiritalis cotidie sublimetur, donec omnis eius conuersatio, omnis uolutatio cordis una et iugis efficiatur oratio.'

²³⁰ Cf. (Codina 1966), p. 86: 'Pues si el Padre nos ha creado a su imagen y semejanza en Cristo, si el Padre debe ser imitado imitando a Cristo su imagen perfecta, y si nuestra imagen se consume en la filiación divina y en por Cristo, es lógico que el Padre también sea contemplado en Cristo y por Cristo, y por tanto la contemplación de Cristo es ya el "summum bonum" que no cesará, ni debe ser evacuado ante un bien superior, pues Cristo lejos de ocultarnos al Padre, nos lo revela.'

²³¹ Cassian, *conl* 10.8.4: 'Cuius haec esse principia tenuiter suspicamur, ut primum nouerimus qua meditatione teneatur uel cogitetur deus, deinde hanc eandem quaecumque est materiam quemadmodum ualeamus immobiliter custodire, quod etiam non ambigimus culmen totius perfectionis exsistere.'

‘And consequently we wish to be shown what is the substance of this memory by which God is conceived by the mind or held in perpetuity, so that keeping it before our eyes, when we perceive that we have fallen away from it, we might have ready means by which we can return to it when we regain our sense and be able to resume it without any difficulty in seeking it or further ado.’²³² The sheer effrontery of what Germanus has told Isaac is staggering. At the same time, it is a wonderful instance of monastic candour. ‘For that reason it is clear enough that this confusion befalls us since we do not have anything special placed before our eyes like some formula to which the wandering mind can be recalled after many windings and various circuits and enter like a port of silence after tedious shipwrecks.’²³³ Germanus’ boldness is impressive. Not only does he use the same sort of language Serapion had used about God (*proponere, tenere*), Germanus goes even further (*concupire, retinere, sentire, oculi, materia, concepta*). While it may be the case that it ‘is really Germanus’ own mind, rather than the illimitable God, that needs to be held’,²³⁴ Cassian does not spare a word to say so. Instead, Isaac pointedly declines to correct Germanus’ language and indeed congratulates him for his meticulous and painstaking search instead.²³⁵ In fact, full weight must be given to the etymological sense of ‘theoria’ as *seeing*, because Germanus has proposed this language and Isaac has endorsed it. What was at stake in the case of Serapion was not that he relied on representations – so do Isaac, Germanus and Cassian; rather, it was that Serapion had not

²³² Ibid.: ‘Et idcirco quendam memoriae huius materiam, qua deus mente concipiatur uel perpetuo teneatur, nobis cupimus demonstrari, ut eam prae oculis retinentes, cum elapsos nos ab eadem senserimus, habeamus in promptu quo resipiscentes ilico reuertamur ac resumere illam sine ulla circuitus mora et inquisitionis difficultate possimus.’

²³³ Cassian, *conl* 10.8.5: ‘Quam confusionem idcirco nobis accidere satis certum est, quia speciale aliquid prae oculis propositum uelut formulam quendam stabiliter non tenemus, ad quam possit uagus animus post multos anfractus ac discursus uarios reuocari et post longa naufragia uelut portum quietis intrare.’

²³⁴ (Stewart 1998), p. 110

²³⁵ Cassian, *conl* 10.9.1-3

progressed far enough in the spiritual life (that is, from *praktikè* to *theoria*) to be able to use representations properly. Which representations are valid and how they are to be used is the theme that Isaac takes up next.

Isaac corroborates what we have seen before with his applause for Germanus' and Cassian's eagerness to seek out aids to prayer and use them with discernment. It is not the case that an Origenian mind functions differently than an Anthropomorphite mind does. Both need bearings and fixed points in their prayers. So, after an impressive introduction, Isaac gives Germanus and Cassian 'the pious formula... absolutely necessary for possessing the perpetual recollection of God' – a 'pious formula' that Isaac claims to have received 'from a few of the most ancient fathers who were still around' (*a paucis qui antiquissimorum patrum residui erant*).²³⁶ It is Psalm 70.1, 'O God, come unto my aid; O Lord, hasten to help me' (*Deus in adiutorium meum intende: domine ad adiuuandum mihi festina*).²³⁷ Codina has speculated that this prayer is addressed to Christ.²³⁸ Although he offers no arguments in support of this claim, the Christocentric nature of Isaac's teaching justifies Codina's speculation. So the life of prayer is equated with the perpetual recollection of God, which earlier in this section Isaac had called the 'iugem dei memoriam' – the 'continuous recollection of God'. And the focal point of this recollection is Christ Jesus.

By running through an exhaustive list of situations in which Ps. 70.1 is appropriate, Isaac establishes that it is relevant for the whole of the monastic life. As he says, 'It takes up every emotion that can be born by human nature and adapts itself

²³⁶ Cassian, *conl* 10.10.2: 'ad perpetuam dei memoriam possidendam haec inseparabiliter ... formula pietatis.'

²³⁷ Cf. John of Gaza, *ep* 143, (Neyt 1998), pp. 520-524

fittingly, even expertly, to every situation and assault.²³⁹ Recalling that this Conference was originally intended to be the last, we can see that Cassian meant this invocation to be the capstone of his exhortatory account of monastic life. It militates against excess, rebuts each deadly temptation and is suitable for constant use, even while sleeping.²⁴⁰ Isaac adds that this prayer increases virtue.²⁴¹ If the previous chapter was a recapitulation of the life of ascetic struggle described in the *Institutes*, this chapter is an encomium of the attainment of spiritual contemplation described in the *Conferences*.

In the final section, Isaac makes a surprising move. He gives priority to experience above seeing some image – which is exactly what the anthropomorphites value most highly – but also above repeating a formula – which would appear to be what he has just endorsed!²⁴² In fact, Isaac was primarily interested in the results of praying that formula, not the formula itself. But the use of this formula, informed by Origenian exegesis of Scripture, within the ascetic life leads its practitioner to the experience of God – which is precisely the point of prayer. It is here that the superiority of the Origenian approach over anthropomorphic prayer is clearest. If prayer is meant to put people in contact with God, then the rightness of the Origenian approach to prayer is shown up in contrast to the practice of the anthropomorphic monks. From the perspective of Origenian theology as revealed by Cassian, anthropomorphic models of prayer dangerously limit the influence of God to forms familiar and therefore recognisable to the human mind.

²³⁸ (Codina 1966), p. 184: ‘La fórmula que Casiano recomienda, “Deus in adiutorium meum intende...”, es con toda probabilidad una fórmula cristológica, una oración a Jesús.’

²³⁹ Cassian, *conl* 10.10.3-15: ‘Recipit enim omnes adfectus quicumque inferri humanae possunt naturae et ad omnem statum atque universos incursus proprie satis et competenter aptatur.’

²⁴⁰ Cassian, *conl* 10.10.15

²⁴¹ Cassian, *conl* 10.11.1-6

²⁴² Cassian, *conl* 10.11.6

Yet even now, even after Isaac has undermined the case for anthropomorphic spirituality, Germanus is eager to hold tight and indeed unshakably to a formula and spiritual thoughts.²⁴³ Here again, Isaac's response may come as a surprise. So far from chastising Germanus for an evident lapse, with great skill he reinforces Germanus' intentions by satisfying Germanus' question. This shows us yet again that Origenians are not insensitive to the mental exigencies that make anthropomorphic prayer attractive in the first place.²⁴⁴ The chief problem for Germanus is the mind's natural tendency to wander.²⁴⁵ So Isaac recapitulates the classic Evagrian doctrine by telling them, 'there are three things that stabilise a wandering mind: vigils, meditation and prayer, continuous and assiduous attention to which confers on the soul firm stability.'²⁴⁶

This means that, although ascetic struggle is preliminary to pure contemplation, nevertheless contemplation does not eliminate the need for ascetic struggle. Indeed, the struggle is needed in order to maintain contemplation. In fact, in the next brief section, Isaac avers that *praktikè* is never left behind. The monk must always strive to pray without ceasing.²⁴⁷ Cassian concludes by noting that the notional simplicity of this practice, together with its actual difficulty, mean that no one is excluded from accomplishing unceasing prayer on the basis of illiteracy or simplicity.²⁴⁸ Basically, he is insisting that the difference between the Origenians and the Anthropomorphites is not one

²⁴³ Cassian, *conl* 10.12-13.3: 'stabiliter retinere ... immobiliter retentemus'

²⁴⁴ Cassian, *conl* 10.12

²⁴⁵ Cassian, *conl* 10.13.1-3

²⁴⁶ Cassian, *conl* 10.14.1: 'Tria sunt quae uagam mentem stabilem faciunt, uigiliae, meditatio et oratio, quarum adsiduitas et iugis intentio conferunt animae stabilem firmitatem.' The first half quotes Evagrius, *prak* 15, (Guillaumont 1971), p. 536; cf. (Marsili 1936), p. 101 (Marsili also notes *conl* 4.12.4 in this connection). About the natural movement of the mind, Codina refers to *conl* 1.16-7, and quotes *ibid.*, 7.4.2. With reference to *conl* 23.13, he claims, 'Es una consecuencia del peccado original.' ((Codina 1966), p. 91)

²⁴⁷ Cassian, *conl* 10.14.2

²⁴⁸ Cassian, *conl* 10.14.3

of intellectual calibre. Even a simple monk could be Origenian.²⁴⁹ Allegations of ‘intellectualism’ are fundamentally misplaced in a discussion of the Origenist controversy, serving only to validate the caricature of Origenian theology offered by its opponents. There is no reason to endorse a facile dichotomy of ‘pious Egyptian natives v. intellectual Greek newcomers’.²⁵⁰ The presupposed relationships between ethnicity and culture are hopelessly muddled: by the time the Coptic language emerges, Greek influence has permeated Egyptian society for centuries, and there is no reason whatever to affirm *a priori* that Egyptian Christians were linguistically and culturally isolated from Greek theology.²⁵¹ Beyond these basic observations, we know of Greeks who opposed the ‘Origenists’ (e.g., Theophilus himself)²⁵² and Egyptians who opposed the

²⁴⁹ My claim is different to that which Samuel Rubenson has urged insistently for several years now (see (Rubenson 1995b), (Rubenson 1995a)): whereas I suggest that simple monks could be Origenian, Rubenson argues that supposedly simple monks, like Antony, were actually quite sophisticated. Though I am not contesting his point, Rubenson’s claims have sparked a lively debate with Graham Gould: (Gould 1993b), (Gould 1995); Rubenson’s response: (Rubenson 1999).

²⁵⁰ This dichotomy can be traced back to early literature (e.g., *apoph* Arsenius 5, 6 (PG 65.88-89); likewise, Theophilus sharply contrasts the Origenists to the ‘more rustic and uneducated’ monks before denouncing both groups to Constantinople: *ep Const scripta* (fr. 7), (Richard 1975), p. 63)); and it is found in many contemporary interpretations of these controversies; see, e.g., (Labourt 1954-1955), 4.186; (Carruthers 1998), pp. 71-2; and (Clark 1992), whose ‘élite networks’ curiously fail to represent Egyptians (pp. 11-42), though they are treated elsewhere (pp. 151-8) – so the Egyptians, we may presume, constitute ‘provincial networks’. The conjunction of ancient witness is heady, but in fact it is far less conclusive than one might think from the way subsequent generations have accepted it as an axiom of scholarship.

²⁵¹ Crum’s magisterial *Coptic Dictionary* unfortunately does not reflect the enormous stock of Greek vocabulary co-opted into the language. But this is precisely because of the profusion of Greek, as Crum attests: ‘The book being a dictionary of the Coptic language, the countless Greek words, scattered through every class of text, cannot claim inclusion’, (Crum 1939), p. viii. (See also (Lefort 1950), pp. 65-71; (Orlandi 1986); and, more generally, (Bagnall 1993), pp. 230-260.). Consequently, even in cases where we can infer that the Egyptians had no Greek, we are not justified in assuming on that basis that they were insulated from Greek culture. In any case, bilingualism (not least in the monasteries) and literacy are regular features of the clergy in Egypt during this period. On bilingualism, see (Bagnall 1993), pp. 244-245 and (Dummer 1968); a good primary source is the *Letter of Ammon*, 4-7, 17, 28-29, (Goehring 1986), pp. 127-129, 136-137, 150-152. On literacy, see (Wipszycka 1984), pp. 288-9; (Bagnall 1993), pp. 248-9. Quantification of literacy is of course impossible; (Roberts 1979), pp. 24-25.

²⁵² Recently, Norman Russell has persuasively argued that Theophilus’ opposition to Origenism was not the *volte-face* it has been taken to have been: (Russell forthcoming). The term ‘Origenist’ occurs in inverted commas because it is historically a polemical term; it is used to assimilate persons, ideas and writings to the propositions condemned by Justinian and others. In the present work, it will be used to describe the controversy about those propositions. But the persons, ideas and writings will be called ‘Origenian’ – a neologism free from the polemic connotations of the older term.

‘Anthropomorphites’ (e.g., ps.-Agathonicus)²⁵³ or were otherwise influenced heavily by Origenian exegesis (e.g., Rufus of Shotep)²⁵⁴ or were full-blown Origenians (e.g., Pambo).²⁵⁵ For the Origenians, what was at stake was not at all being cleverer than the local bumpkins; it was being better integrated, less subject to demonic temptation and more receptive to God.

- *In excessu mentis*: The Holy Spirit and Christ in Cassian’s teaching on prayer

In his teaching about prayer, Cassian integrates emotion into his overall account with impressive ease. Although he gives us no reason to suppose that emotional experience is a necessary component of prayer, in numerous passages Cassian lovingly dwells on the profound emotions that enrich the Christian’s life of prayer. Cassian and Germanus’ description to Abba Daniel of the vicissitudes of prayer provides a convenient instance:

So this blessed Daniel [responded] to us when we asked why sometimes, while sitting in the cell, we are filled with such keenness of heart along with a certain ineffable joy and overflow of most holy feelings, so that not merely no speech, but even no feeling would occur to follow it; and also pure and ready prayer would be sent forth and the mind, full of spiritual fruits and making supplications even while asleep, perceived its efficacious and light prayers to come through to God...²⁵⁶

²⁵³ On his treatise, see A. Ehrhard, in (Crum 1915), pp. 155-8, 169; and (Orlandi 1980). According to Ehrhard, p. 169, ‘die dem Bischofe Agathonicus von Tarsus zugeschriebenen Schriften sind Pseudepigraphen. Ihr wirklicher Verfasser ist ein pachomianischer Mönch, der sich “nach berühmten Mustern” eines bischöflichen Decknamens bediente, um ihnen eine größere Autorität zu sichern.’

²⁵⁴ (Sheridan 1998); Sheridan has also found evidence for Alexandrian exegesis in Paul of Tamma and the Pachomians, which is in some (but not all) cases distinctly Origenian: (Sheridan 1997b), pp. 204-207, 211-215.

²⁵⁵ The evidence for Pambo’s Origenism is admittedly circumstantial, but it can be reasonably inferred from his direct influence on the Tall Brothers and the admiration he enjoyed from other known Origenists; see Palladius, *HL* 10.1-4, 11.1, 11.4, (Bartelink 1974), pp. 46-48, 50-54.

²⁵⁶ Cassian, *conl* 4.2.1: ‘Hic igitur beatus Danihel [respondit] inquiringibus nobis, cur interdum residentes in cellula tanta alacritate cordis cum ineffabili quodam gaudio et exuberantia sacratissimorum sensuum

Likewise, in the arena of ascetic struggle, Cassian endorses the use of prayer against one's peculiar vices in the form of 'pouring forth unceasing wails of prayer to God'.²⁵⁷ In the same conference, Serapion also counsels attention, sighing, groaning, vigils, meditations and petitions.²⁵⁸ Chaeremon similarly offers a markedly affective description of prayer.²⁵⁹ Clearly, Cassian regarded the emotions as a potential ally in the spiritual life.

It is well worth noting that some of the most expansive treatments of emotional prayer Cassian offers are also the most explicit descriptions of the intellect's role in prayer. Thus, Abba Isaac significantly connects *puras ac feruentissimas supplicationes* with both a most pure mind and a most fervent heart.²⁶⁰ This is a theme dear to Isaac, to judge from how he emphasises it. Let us return to that singularly important passage in which Isaac links his sublime description of ineffable prayer to the vision of the divine light.²⁶¹

So then this prayer [...] leads His familiars through a loftier grade to that fiery prayer which is known or experienced by very few, but (that I may speak more precisely) is ineffable. This prayer, which transcends all human understanding, is not distinguished by any sound of the voice or movement of the tongue or pronunciation of words, I would say. Rather it is this prayer that the mind, enlightened by the infusion of that heavenly light, does not describe by constricted, human eloquence; but, with its senses gathered together, it abundantly gives forth as it were from some most plentiful fountain and ineffably talks to God. In that most fleeting moment of time, it produces so many things that the mind, once it turns back upon itself, is incapable of speaking readily about them, either eloquently or summarily.²⁶²

repleremur, ut eam non dicam sermo subsequi, sed ne ipse quidem sensus occurreret, oratio quoque pura emitteretur ac prompta et mens plena spiritalibus fructibus preces suas efficaces ac leues etiam per soporem supplicans ad deum peruenire sentiret...

²⁵⁷ Cassian, *conl* 5.14.1: 'indesinentes quoque orationum fletus ad deum fundens'

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Cassian, *conl* 12.12.6-7

²⁶⁰ Cassian, *conl* 9.15.1

²⁶¹ Cassian, *conl* 9.25; cf. 5.35

²⁶² See fn. 180.

A number of features in his speech are worth noting. First, Isaac places great emphasis on the enlightenment of the mind (*mens infusione caelestis illius luminis inlustrata*) and by doing that he insures that the intellectual aspect of prayer gets its due.²⁶³ Even though he subordinates the mind to God, Isaac never loses sight of the indispensable role played by the mind in prayer. Second, the senses are not ‘suspended’ in this process.²⁶⁴ Instead, they are accumulated or massed together (*conglobatis sensibus*). The expression is unusual, but *conglobo* clearly indicates a gathering together.²⁶⁵ (The relevant image is that of an unborn child curled up in the womb.)²⁶⁶ So Isaac does not mean that the senses are inert during prayer; rather, he means that the senses are greatly focused. Third, Isaac’s emphasis on the ineffability of this experience recalls Paul’s words in Romans 8.26: ‘Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.’²⁶⁷ Other descriptions of prayer confirm Isaac’s intimation that the Holy Spirit articulates the prayers of Christians,²⁶⁸ though in ways that the Christians themselves cannot (or at least cannot fully) comprehend. Fourth, Isaac is describing a process whereby the person praying addresses God by God’s assistance. When he speaks of the mind turning back upon itself (*mens in semet ipsam*

²⁶³ Stewart assimilates it to Cassian’s metaphor of fire, which he takes to refer to emotions: (Stewart 1998), p. 118.

²⁶⁴ Pace (Ramsey 1997), p. 346.

²⁶⁵ It glosses *συναθροίζω* (see (Gertz 1888-1923), 2.109.20), which in turn is often used to describe Christians assembling for worship (Lampe, s.v.)

²⁶⁶ Cf. Pliny, *hist nat* 10.84.183, (Rackham 1938-1962), 3.408: ‘homo [gestatur] in semet conglobatus inter duo genua naribus sitis.’

²⁶⁷ So, too, (Degli Innocenti 2000), pp. 45 n. 43, 46 n. 44, 59 n. 97, 95 n. 37. Stewart by contrast regards 2 Cor 12.2-4 as the programmatic passage for Cassian’s teaching about prayer. However, the parallels he adduces are not convincing: although Cassian does indeed talk of being ‘seized’, he does not in fact talk of ‘feeling oneself somehow “outside the body”’, nor of ‘hearing words that are “unutterable” and beyond the capacity of human speech’, (Stewart 1998), p. 119. Instead of *hearing* unutterable words, Cassian refers to *praying* them.

²⁶⁸ Cf. Cassian, *conl* 9.15.2, 10.10.12

reuersa) and being unable to describe the experience satisfactorily, we should not be surprised. After all, he has just taught that God, whose ways are inscrutable, is at work in our prayers.

Isaac's discourse with its central emphasis on the illuminated mind provides the foundation for understanding Cassian's descriptions of prayer as *excessus mentis*. A word about that expression is in order. The phrase can be construed as either 'the mind's going out' (if *mentis* is taken as a subjective genitive) or as 'going out of the mind' (if *mentis* is taken as an objective genitive).²⁶⁹ The first possibility is not problematic: as we will see, it straightforwardly corresponds to the mind's disengagement from worldly considerations. But the second possibility is trickier. Fr. Columba Stewart, an expert on Cassian's writings, has argued that it designates ecstatic prayer.²⁷⁰ He has claimed that this 'ecstatic' dimension sets Cassian apart from Evagrius.²⁷¹ Stewart based his argument on two observations: Cassian's characteristic use of emotional language when describing prayer differs strikingly from Evagrius' use of intellectual language;²⁷² and 'the departure of the mind' (as he thinks the phrase should be understood in a number of passages) is a proposition that is at odds with Evagrius' theological anthropology.²⁷³ These claims, put forward by a keen scholar, command our attention.

²⁶⁹ On this grammatical ambivalence, see (Gildersleeve 1997), § 363, p. 232.

²⁷⁰ I abstain from using the term 'ecstasy' in what follows. That term is problematic chiefly because the criteria for judging whether an experience is ecstatic or not are notoriously uncertain. Rather than agonising over the delicious little uncertainties of language, I think it is better to proceed cautiously using terms that are happily dull. For a direct engagement with the problem of language and mystical experience, see the essays collected in (Katz 1992).

²⁷¹ (Stewart 1998), pp. 31, 84-86, 105, 108, 113-130. Stewart bolsters his case with a great number of references to Cassian's writings.

²⁷² Stewart inexplicably collapses Evagrian prayer into Evagrian gnosis, which makes his contrast off kilter, (Stewart 1998), p. 108. This leads him to misestimate how close Evagrius' teaching that 'prayer is the ascent of the mind' (*orat* 36) is to Cassian's teaching, in my view.

²⁷³ (Stewart 1998), p. 120. At p. 215 n. 90, Stewart bolsters his claim with a reference to (Bunge 1987), p. 76. However Bunge's perspective has considerable nuance, and (but for Bunge's rejection of the term 'ecstasy'), his perspective is perhaps not far from that of Bishop Kallistos Ware: 'If, therefore, Evagrius is

Let us begin with the second claim. Stewart notes that taking *mentis* as an objective genitive means that Cassian recognised ‘a “departure from the mind or heart” when the “mind on fire” cannot contain the prayers inspired in it by grace. This seems to be a kind of spiritual ravishment, in which the resulting prayers burst the limits of human understanding and expression.’²⁷⁴ There is no question that Cassian endorsed rapture (Stewart’s ‘ravishment’),²⁷⁵ but rapture need mean only freedom from being distracted by quotidian concerns for oneself or one’s neighbours, so that one can pursue the spiritual life. This is evident in the cases related by John, Paphnutius and Daniel. (In John’s case, we should note that this rapture freed him specifically for contemplation.)²⁷⁶ The case related by Isaac is more complex. He talks not only of rapture, but also of fervency and fiery prayer.²⁷⁷ These themes, together with ineffability, are common to the passages Stewart notes to support his interpretation of ‘departure from the mind or heart’.²⁷⁸

But caution is required here. These passages uniformly indicate that what the mind cannot contain,²⁷⁹ or adequately recall and describe later,²⁸⁰ are the ineffable prayers themselves.²⁸¹ The only movement from the mind this establishes is that of the prayer itself – and there is nothing so odd about prayers going from one’s mind.

termed an “intellectualist”, then it must at once be added that he is very far from being such in the normal modern sense of the word. When he envisages prayer as communion with God on a level above discursive thinking and as the absence of sensation or self-awareness (*ἀναίσθησία*), his standpoint is what today would be designated, not “intellectual”, but “mystical” or even “ecstatic”, (Ware 1985), p. 162. Cf. (Bunge 1989).

²⁷⁴ (Stewart 1998), p. 117.

²⁷⁵ Abba John provides some of the best descriptions: *conl* 19.4.1-5.2; but see also *conl* 3.7.3, 4.5, 9.15.1. The term is ambivalent, though, as is evident from passages in which it is clearly bad: see (Stewart 1998), p. 211 n. 28.

²⁷⁶ Cassian, *conl* 19.5.2

²⁷⁷ Cassian, *conl* 9.15.1

²⁷⁸ See also Cassian, *inst* 3.10.1, *conl* 9.15.2, 9.26-28, 9. 25, 9.31, 10.11.6, 12.12.6

²⁷⁹ Cassian, *inst* 2.10.1

²⁸⁰ Cassian, *conl* 9.25

²⁸¹ Cassian, *conl* 9.15.2, 9.26-28, 10.11.6

Meanwhile, talk of contemplation frequently occurs in conjunction with the *excessus*,²⁸² and (what is even more interesting) talk of ‘stability of thoughts’ also occurs – not only before the *excessus*, but even simultaneous to it.²⁸³ It is consequently hard to believe that Cassian is describing someone at prayer who by praying departs from his own mind. It is difficult to think of a stranger corollary to ‘departure from the mind’ than stability of thoughts!

As for the claim that Cassian is unlike Evagrius on account of his heavy emphasis on emotions, this is plainly true. But we have already noted what an important place Evagrius gave to the emotions in Christian development. The emotions promote spiritual growth in general, and prayer in particular. Consequently, the simple presence in Cassian’s writings of emotional languages does not signal a departure from the Evagrian tradition. So the question arises: what sort of qualitative shift must we find before positing additional sources? Stewart, noting that the ‘atmosphere’ of Cassian’s writings ‘is no longer purely Evagrian’,²⁸⁴ has argued that Cassian had recourse to other sources to complement the Evagrian tradition. To this end, he has revived the ill-starred hypothesis of Fr Alphons Kemmer that Cassian was in contact with Syrian traditions, such as those represented in the *Liber graduum* and the ps.-Macarian homilies.²⁸⁵ The influence of Kemmer’s thesis, generally unavailable in the West,²⁸⁶ has been limited by the unrelentingly harsh reviews of it that are far more readily available.²⁸⁷ Those reviews,

²⁸² Cassian, *conl* 1.15.2, 6.10.2, 9.15.1, 19.5.2

²⁸³ Cassian, *conl* 10.10.12

²⁸⁴ (Stewart 1998), p. 114.

²⁸⁵ (Kemmer 1938), (Kemmer 1948), pp. 12-15, (Kemmer 1955).

²⁸⁶ In England, for instance, neither the British Library nor the Bodleian have the book. I am only aware of one copy in a private collection. In the United States, there are only half-a-dozen copies.

²⁸⁷ (Hausherr 1940); (Chadwick 1950), pp. 148-49, fn. 7; (Cappelle 1943). I have not been able to locate any contemporary German reviews for the purpose of comparison, but Klaus Fitschen’s verdict is unsparing: ‘Diese Parallelen sind aber auf seiten des LIBER GRADUUM so verstreut und

though delightful to read, were one-sided. Fr Hausherr, for instance, singularly overlooked Kemmer's thorough and excellent philological analysis of *charisma* in Cassian's writings. And yet Kemmer's most sympathetic reader must agree with Hausherr, however reluctantly, that Kemmer failed to make his case. The parallels that he adduced are paltry and unpersuasive. The rejections of Kemmer may have been uncharitable, but they were not unwarranted.

However, Stewart is not only sympathetic to Kemmer; he is also extremely clever. His first major book established him as an authority on Messalianism,²⁸⁸ and he has made some tantalising remarks on the parallel between Cassian's and ps.-Macarius' writings with respect to rapture and fiery prayer²⁸⁹ as well as compunction and tears.²⁹⁰ He also drew up a list of possible junctures when Cassian might have come in contact with these trends.²⁹¹ Since there are a number of gaps in our knowledge about Cassian's life that are unlikely ever to be closed, Stewart's conjectures cannot be denied. Furthermore, Stewart's willingness to look beyond Evagrius for sources of Cassian's thought – and to allow for Cassian's independent development – is praiseworthy. These facts notwithstanding, some proof is needed if the claim that he was in contact with Syrian mystical trends is to be held. And yet Stewart's parallels are ultimately no more conclusive than Kemmer's were.

Since there is no strong basis for his claim, it will be desirable to return to the ignored emotional aspects of Evagrian prayer. Evagrius had a lively interest in drafting

unzusammenhängend und betreffen darüber hinaus letztlich *nur einzelne Worte und Aussagen*, daß sie nicht wirklich schlagend sind. [...] und so ist eher anzunehmen, daß Cassian auf gängige Anschauungen des östlichen Mönchtums zurückgegriffen hat.' (Fitschen 1998), p. 122 (emp. added); cf. p. 133.

²⁸⁸ (Stewart 1991)

²⁸⁹ (Stewart 1998), pp. 117-22

²⁹⁰ (Stewart 1998), pp. 122-29

²⁹¹ (Stewart 1998), p. 115

emotions into the spiritual life.²⁹² Furthermore, even the rapturous emotional descriptions in Cassian's *Conferences*, most notably those ascribed to Isaac, are coloured by intellectual elements that are recognisably Evagrian. Although Syrian influence cannot be ruled out, the case for it has not been established; and indeed there is sufficient basis in Evagrius' own writings to see in Cassian's modifications an independent reworking of Evagrius' teaching about prayer. Granted that Cassian emphasised some elements of Evagrius' account that were marginal in Evagrius' own teaching, this need mean no more than that the two had different personalities.

Even if Stewart's argument about ecstasy is inconclusive, he nevertheless drew attention to a key term of Cassian's thought by analysing *excessus*. In close conjunction with his descriptions of *excessus*, Cassian describes the role played by the Holy Spirit in Christian prayer. Because Cassian has been faulted for demonstrating little theological competence, these descriptions take on additional interest. The premise of Cassian's teaching is nothing other than Evagrius' account of spiritual development. Abba Theodore in effect offers a conspectus of that doctrine, adorned with emotional terms, but holding fast to the importance of extirpating vices through ascetic practice, contemplating the spiritual realities, eschewing worldly distractions, and fervently praying to God.²⁹³ The added emphasis on ardent desire and spiritual ardour distinguish this short passage from Evagrius' style, but the content is unexceptionally Evagrian.

Something rather similar occurs, with one important difference, in Abba Isaac's account of prayer. We have already had occasion to note Isaac's high fidelity to the Evagrian tradition on prayer. While expatiating on the virtues of reciting Psalm 70.1,

²⁹² See pp. 62, 70-71, above.

²⁹³ Cassian, *conl* 6.10.2

Isaac describes the ‘direction of soul, stability of thoughts, keenness of heart’ that accompany mental transport and refers to an ‘overflow of spiritual perceptions’ and ‘revelation of most holy understanding’ experienced by the intellect, properly ordered and thinking spiritual thoughts and illuminated by the Lord, in consequence of this.²⁹⁴ The signal element in this passage, however, is the ‘visitation of the Holy Spirit’. Isaac has already echoed St Paul: the Holy Spirit within us and on our behalf prompts ‘unutterable groanings’ by way of prayer to God.²⁹⁵ The intercession of the Holy Spirit and the concomitant ‘unutterable groanings’ are regular components of Isaac’s discourses on prayer. Indeed, they are constituent elements of pure prayer, on Isaac’s account.²⁹⁶ Even when he explains how the mind powers forth prayers to God in terms of the *excessus cordis*, Isaac introduces ‘unutterable groans and sighs’ (*gemitibus inenarrabilibus atque suspiriis*).²⁹⁷

This teaching is not Isaac’s alone. Cassian teaches it on his own authority as an abba and accomplished student of the Desert Fathers.²⁹⁸ Abba Chaëremon, similarly talking of the *excessus cordis*, informs Cassian and Germanus that the Holy Spirit inspires the revelations that prompt the joys he has been describing.²⁹⁹ As we noted above, Chaëremon founded his teaching about the need for God’s protection on prayer. Now we see that he not only considered prayer a necessary measure for protecting the

²⁹⁴ Cassian, *conl* 10.10.12

²⁹⁵ Cassian, *conl* 9.15.2

²⁹⁶ Cassian, *conl* 9.26.1-27

²⁹⁷ Cassian, *conl* 10.11.6

²⁹⁸ Cassian, *inst* 2.10.1; Cassian is given the honorific title ‘abba’ in the *Apophthegmata*.

²⁹⁹ Cassian, *conl* 12.12.6-7, quoting 1 Cor. 2.10. As with the emotions, Evagrius was well-aware of the role played by the Holy Spirit in the Christian life, especially the Christian’s life of prayer: cf. *orat* 63. Fr. Bunge has persuasively argued that the Spirit had an all-pervasive role in Evagrius’ thought and for just that reason defends the use of the term ‘spirituality’ as exactly appropriate to describe what Evagrius was up to: (Bunge 1994), pp. 7-11. But, as with the emotions, Cassian developed the teaching he learnt from Evagrius and enriched it with his own observations.

spiritual advances one has made and for gaining others, but he also reckoned that prayer itself is a gift from God. Likewise, in his conference about ‘flesh and the spirit’, Abba Daniel relates how the mind is seized in a ‘spiritual transport’ by the grace of God and is thereby moved beyond the limitations of the flesh.³⁰⁰ Daniel’s mention of divine grace puts the finishing touches to Cassian’s writings on *excessus*, or at least *excessus* in a good sense.

At one point in his discussion, Isaac identified the requisite state needed for ceaseless prayer as ‘a spiritual and angelic likeness’.³⁰¹ We have already seen that, for Evagrius, Christian likeness to angels is evident first and foremost when the Christian prays to God, particularly on behalf of other people. So heavily did Evagrius stress this likeness that he has been represented as teaching that humans actually become angels. Isaac’s innocuous remark about the ‘angelic likeness’ belongs within the ambient of this strong teaching. And the commonplace adjective ‘spiritual’ is no less momentous.³⁰² In much the same way that monks can be called ‘angelic’ because they function like angels function, they can be called ‘spiritual’ because they enjoy the presence of the Holy

³⁰⁰ Cassian, *conl* 4.5; this is the sole occurrence of *excessus spiritus* in Cassian’s books.

³⁰¹ Cassian, *conl* 9.6.5: ‘spiritalēm atque angelicam similitudinē’

³⁰² The full significance of the term ‘spiritalis’ is evident in Cassian’s teaching on the Spirit’s relationship to Holy Scripture and its interpretation. Cassian is quite serious that the Spirit *inspired* Scripture (*inst* 3.3.7) and he reports Theodore’s teaching that the grace of the Spirit is needed for interpreting Scripture (*inst* 5.34). For this reason, full weight must be given to Cassian’s unassuming expression ‘spiritual meditation’ (*inst* 2.5.2, 2.14-15.1, 3.5; cf. 1.8, 3.4.3). Theodore linked spiritual interpretation of scripture to the ascetic life. We are therefore justified in associating this entire complex of activities associated with the Holy Spirit to Abba Pinufius’ discussion about the ‘spiritual rule’ (*inst* 4.41) and indeed the whole host of terms Cassian uses to describe the ascetic life in relation to the Holy Spirit. Critical terms he modifies as ‘spiritual’ include *profectum* (*inst* 1.11.1, 2.14), *contemplatio* (*inst* 2.12.2, 2.14), *officium* (*inst* 3.3.1), *animadversio* (*inst* 4.16.2), *increpatio* (*inst* 4.16.3), *exercitatio* (*inst* 4.17), *remedium* (*inst* 5.2.3), *functio* (*inst* 5.8), *agon* (*inst* 5.12.1-2, 6.1, 17.2), *studium* (*inst* 5.14.3), *congressio* (*inst* 5.16.2), *certamen* (*inst* 5.18.2), *pugna* (*inst* 5.19.2), *fructus* (*inst* 5.21.3), *intentio* (*inst* 5.32.3). Naturally, he also mentions ‘spiritual conferences’ (*inst* 5.29, 31) and ‘necessary, spiritual objects’ of discussion (*inst* 5.31). Perhaps most charming is his description of the virtues as ‘spiritual honey’ (*inst* 5.4.2), produced by the eager monastic bees who fly from flower to flower collecting nectar (cf. Athanasius, *u Ant* 3.4, (Bartelink 1994), p. 136; Palladius, *HL* 48.2, (Bartelink 1974), p. 238; *uerba sen* 5.187, 7.32.7 (PL 73.800, 1051); see (Weber 1961), pp. 81-82).

Spirit.³⁰³ Isaac stipulates that ‘apart from enormous purity of heart and soul and the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit’ the types of prayer cannot be comprehended;³⁰⁴ how much more, then, must the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, together with enormous purity of heart and soul, be necessary for actually praying! It is highly significant that Cassian designates prayer as ‘spiritual sacrifices’.³⁰⁵ Prayer is a gift of the Holy Spirit.³⁰⁶

We have not yet considered the bad sense of *excessus*, which in fact sets what we have just observed in sharper relief. *Excessus* can denote an excess of nearly anything at all. Thus, Germanus and Cassian ask Abba Daniel about the problem of a ‘slippery excess of unstable agitation’.³⁰⁷ And when they learn from Abba Theonas about the causes and dangers of nocturnal emissions of semen, they find that the excess of semen is attributable to indulgence of some sort or another (in food, in carelessness, or in pride).³⁰⁸ Shortly after Theonas tells them this, he says that the ‘excesses’ of wandering thoughts can also contribute to that shameful occurrence.³⁰⁹ Because Cassian championed moderation and temperance, often the vices he relates are excesses of virtuous behaviour. Immoderate fervour, for instance, lead to the downfall of Abba Paul. Paul’s overweening concern for purity of heart prompted him to flee women. Abba Serenus tells Germanus and Cassian that Paul would not even look upon the clothing of a woman. But his inappropriate behaviour was justly rewarded when he had a debilitating stroke and had to

³⁰³ Cf. (Kemmer 1938), pp. 34-38.

³⁰⁴ Cassian, *conl* 9.8.1: ‘Universas orationum species absque ingenti cordis atque animae puritate et inluminatione sancti spiritus arbitror comprehendi non posse.’ Cf. (Marsili 1936), p. 134

³⁰⁵ Cassian, *inst* 2.9.3, 17; 8.13

³⁰⁶ Cf. 1 Cor. 12.1-11. Kemmer justifiably counts prayer among the charisma that are gifts of God; (Kemmer 1938), pp. 24-25.

³⁰⁷ Cassian, *conl* 4.2

³⁰⁸ Cassian, *conl* 22.3.1

³⁰⁹ Cassian, *conl* 22.3.5

be cared for by women.³¹⁰ Similarly, an excess of fasting is just as detrimental to ascetic practice as gluttony is. Excess is the opposite of discretion, a monastic virtue so important to Cassian that he allocated a conference to it.³¹¹

Warnings about spiritually unhealthy excesses culminate in a speech by Abba Daniel that is particularly interesting in comparison to Cassian's teaching on the place of the Holy Spirit in prayer.

And so it will come to pass that when, because of that tepidity of a most sluggish will (*uoluntas*) which we have discussed, the mind has fallen the more readily into fleshly desires (*desideria carnis*), it may be drawn back by spiritual desires (*spiritus concupiscentia*), which itself never seeks comfort in earthly vices. And again if by a transport of the heart (*per excessum cordis*) our spirit has been carried off with an immoderate fervour to rash impossibilities, it may be dragged back to the righteous judgement by fleshly weakness and, with sweaty diligence and by most appropriate consistence, walk along the way of perfection by the level path, transcending the most tepid state of our will.³¹²

The *excessus cordis* about which Daniel warns Germanus and Cassian entails all the bad consequences we have seen so far. It is characterised by lack of moderation in attempting through our free will [*uoluntas*] what is impossible. In the context of Daniel's discourse, 'what is impossible' clearly means 'accomplishing true perfection', which is itself a gloss for 'salvation'. Daniel himself contrasts this subservience to the will,³¹³ and the tepidity that goes along with the desires of the flesh, to spiritual fervour.³¹⁴

His contrast and his discourse allow us to distinguish two kinds of *excessus*: that caused by the Holy Spirit which leads to salvation, and that caused by free will which is

³¹⁰ Cassian, *conl* 7.26.4

³¹¹ Cassian, *conl* 2.2.4

³¹² Cassian, *conl* 4.12.6: 'Atque ita fiet, ut cum pro tepore huius quam diximus ignauissimae uoluntatis propensius mens ad desideria carnis fuerit deuoluta, spiritus concupiscentia refrenetur, nequaquam eo uitiiis adquiescente terrenis, rursumque si inmoderato feruore per excessum cordis ad impossibilia fuerit spiritus noster et inconsiderata praereptus, infirmitate carnis ad iustum retrahatur examen et transcendens uoluntatis nostrae tepidissimum statum commodissima temperie planoque tramite cum sudoris industria uiam perfectionis incedat.'

³¹³ Cassian, *conl* 4.12.2

³¹⁴ Cassian, *conl* 4.12.3

futile. At the same time this is an important clarification on the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of prayer, it is also an important qualification on what the free will is capable of accomplishing. In Cassian's work, *excessus* is fundamentally ambivalent. But the ambivalence is not between 'mental transport' and 'transcending one's mind' (it is doubtful he would have understood what that latter means, anyway). Rather, it is between *excessus* motivated by the Holy Spirit and *excessus* motivated by spiritual autonomy. Cassian has a robust understanding of the Holy Spirit's involvement in the Christian life. He has correspondingly little interest in Christian heroism and self-sufficiency, however unexpected this might strike us in a committed ascetic.

AUGUSTINE THE MONK

Before undertaking a re-evaluation of Cassian's role in the theological controversies that took place while he was writing, some stage setting is required. The present chapter will offer this by way of turning to a fact that is overlooked with surprising regularity in the secondary literature. We often meet with the claim that Pelagius, an ascetic-minded reformer, could not abide with the 'pessimism' or even 'fatalism' of Augustine's mature thought. If we approach the Pelagian controversy with this mindset, it is extremely easy to assimilate ascetics to one side of the debate and bishops to the other. Presumably, the thinking that underlies this schematisation is that ascetics would want to stress action and responsibility, both of which depend upon a robust affirmation of human potential; while bishops and theologians with an interest in leading the Church would want to stress sin and obedience, both of which necessitate a consistent teaching about human weakness. *Tertium*, we are led to understand, *non datur*. And this is precisely why people like Cassian are so hard to classify into a satisfactory compartment: they appear to insist on ascetic struggle, while acknowledging the need for obedience because of human frailty. They try to provide a third way, to which scholars attach some unsatisfactory label: semi-Pelagianism, or semi-Augustinianism, or whatever. This is conventional wisdom. What it overlooks is Augustine's own curious life as a bishop and a monk and indeed a monastic founder. Some very impressive recent scholarship enables us to appreciate the impact Augustine's monastic vocation had on his thinking. But as yet the recognition that Augustine was a Christian ascetic well before he was a Christian clergyman – and remained so until his death! – has had no perceptible impact on the discussion of how his contemporaries (not least Cassian and Pelagius) reacted to his teaching on grace. This chapter is an effort to redress that gap in scholarship. If in

the process of doing so it fails to tally with conventional wisdom, so much the better. A good jolt into a changed perspective is highly desirable.

- The eclipse of monastic culture in the Pelagian crisis

It would be as well to say at the onset that the title of this section is not quite accurate. In fact, monastic culture was not at all overshadowed, *toute simple*, in the late Fifth Century. Still, as I have noted, it is only recently that the influence of monastic sensibility during that age has begun to receive the attention it rightly deserves as a factor in the various debates. Dom Columba Stewart's recent study has shown the importance of emphasising the monastic elements of John Cassian's theology. In the process, Stewart argued for the necessity of approaching Cassian precisely as a monk, or, more accurately, as a monk-*cum*-theologian.¹ This was a timely accomplishment that crowned a modern resurgence of interest in the Massilian theologian. What remains is to draw attention to the importance and indeed fruitfulness of employing precisely this strategy to consider Augustine himself as just such a monk-*cum*-theologian. For this reason, perhaps it would have been more appropriate to call this section, 'The oversight of Augustine's monastic vocation as a relevant factor in scholarly analysis of the Pelagian crisis'; but I trust the sacrifice of clarity for the sake of brevity can be forgiven.

In this chapter, I advance two propositions. First, Augustine and his contemporaries in Hadrumetum and Gaul shared a monastic culture – a Mediterranean ascetic *koiné* – in terms of which they analysed, discussed and finally rejected the

¹ Stewart 1998

Pelagians' programme of reform.² This can be seen from the ease with which their successors, such as Julianus Pomerius, Caesarius, Fulgentius of Ruspe, the great Benedict and others, directed both streams into a common channel that ultimately fed Western monasticism.³ Second, the signature elements of Augustinian theology – though they may exist in an uneasy relationship with some aspects of his thinking about monasticism – are nevertheless part and parcel of Augustine's teachings on monasticism.⁴ In consequence of these claims, I argue that the proper way to read Augustine's anti-Pelagian treatises (and, I believe, the way his contemporaries could naturally have read them) is with his principles of monasticism firmly in mind. In other words, we should read them as from the pen of Augustine the Monk, a theologian of considerable monastic refinement. Such a precaution will keep us from falling into the mistaken notion that the 'semi-Pelagian' debates were, in the first instance at least, a case of soft hearts raising a cry of protest against a head that was very hard indeed.

It will also help set aright the deficiency observed some forty years ago by Fr. Adolar Zumkeller, who wrote, 'Modern man sees in St Augustine a seeker after God,

² Cassian, *inc* 1.3, 5.2, 6.14.1, 7.21; cf. (Chadwick 1968), pp. 127-128; (Markus 1990b), pp. 177-179; (Mathisen 1989), p. 130; (Plinval 1943), esp. pp. 216-225; (Ramsey 1997), pp. 460-3; (Rébillard 1994); (Weaver 1996), p. 126. Georges de Plinval, p. 218, summarised the character of Pelagius' reform as follows: 'Ils sont ceux qui connaissent le véritable esprit de «christianité» et leur idéal est de purger la religion de tout accommodement et de toute faiblesse pour y faire régner effectivement la justice complète, afin qu'autant qu'il dépendra d'eux l'Eglise soit dès ce monde immaculée et sans ride.' More will be said on this subject in the chapter on Cassian's response to Pelagianism.

³ Research on the appropriation of Augustinian theology by his contemporaries, monastic, episcopal and lay, is seriously needed. For all its merits, Prof. Brown's approach to Augustine as the paramount influence on the Latin Middle Ages can have the deleterious consequence of leading us to think that 'Augustinianism' was monolithic and moved with glacial impact through history. The new concluding chapters to Brown's second edition acknowledge this tendency and rectify it by pointing to new scholarship in the field. This is a field of huge importance, and one to which I hope to return in future research.

⁴ (Lorenz 1966), pp. 41-42: 'Die eigentliche Bedeutung Augustins für die Geschichte des Mönchtums liegt darin, daß er tiefer als je einer vor ihm die paulinische Theologie in das Mönchtum hineingenommen hat und die Gesetzmäßigkeit des Vollkommenheitsstrebens durch die paulinischen Gedanken vor der Freiheit der Liebe und der Gnade durchbrochen hat.' Cf. also (Sr. Agatha Mary 1992); (Fry 1981), pp. 59-64; (Lawless 1987), esp. pp. 155-161; (van Bavel 1996), pp. 117, 119-120; (Verheijen 1979), pp. 92-93; (Zumkeller 1986).

a bishop, and a great theologian. The monasticism of the saint has largely been forgotten. And yet, his personality can be fully understood and appreciated only in the light of his life and work as a monk.’⁵ We shall therefore consider Augustine as precisely the sort of ‘monk-theorist’ that Professor Brown suggested Cassian was, when he wrote: ‘Cassian [...] was a theorist, writing to persuade Latin readers who did not necessarily share his views.’⁶ If we appreciate the affinities that bound together these ‘monk-theorists,’ we will be better able to offer an accurate estimation of where their views diverged and how significant those divergences were. This may also lead us to re-evaluate the evidence. For instance, instead of finding in the cordiality so typical of this debate a mark of refined distaste at bad form or simple Christian tolerance,⁷ we can begin to see how mutual awareness of a shared heritage and, vis-à-vis the reforms of Pelagius, a common cause can account for it.⁸

Before turning to Cassian, however, let us consider briefly the famous episode of Augustine’s dealings with the monks at Hadrumetum, as a sort of preliminary exercise.⁹ The monks were perplexed and dismayed upon reading a letter Augustine wrote to Sixtus (*ep.* 194), c. 418, so they appealed to him for clarification. Nora Chadwick has rightly presented the affair as a charming one, in which we see one of the Church’s greatest (and busiest) minds turning aside to help a monastic community

⁵ (Zumkeller 1986), p. ix. One indication of how uncommon this realisation has been can be found in Chadwick’s breathtaking claim that Cassian was ‘the first theologian of the religious orders’ (Chadwick 1968), p. 158. Even setting Augustine to one side, it is hard to imagine how Chadwick could have overlooked Basil the Great and Evagrius. Despite the various merits of Chadwick’s study, his treatment of Cassian’s relationship to Augustine (and indeed western theology in general) has begun to show its age. The works of Fr Verheijen are of inestimable value as a corrective to this short-sightedness. Particularly noteworthy are (Verheijen 1956) and (Verheijen 1977).

⁶ (Brown 1989), p. 232; cf. (Stewart 1998), p. 28

⁷ (Chadwick 1968), pp. 127-132; (Markus 1989), p. 178; (Mathisen 1989), p. 124

⁸ (Rébillard 1994); cf. (Brown 1972b); (Brown 1972c); (Nürnberg 1988); *pace* (O’Keeffe 1994, 1995), p. 62

⁹ Augustine, *retr.* 2.59 (CSEL 36.170-172); Augustine, *ep. Morin* (Morin 1901); Evodius, *ep. Morin* (Morin 1896); (Gibson 1995), pp. 190-193; (Grossi 1979; Kasper 1989), pp. 154-6; (O’Keeffe 1994, 1995), p. 59-61; (Zumkeller 1986), pp. 156-8

grasp the subtler points of his treatises.¹⁰ And yet, however pleasing we find this exchange, it will not do to think of it simply as a case in which Augustine, by sheer dint of his superior intellect, impressed some baffled monastic bumpkins into doctrinal capitulation. In the first place, such an evaluation of the monks relies on a questionable reading of the letter Valentine, their abbot, sent Augustine. Valentine's admission of their rusticity need mean little more than that he intends to deal modestly with a well-known theologian who is also (lest we forget) a bishop and who is therefore reasonably addressed as an ecclesiastical superior.¹¹ Meanwhile, in his responses Augustine makes a frank admission that modern students of Augustine may find very gratifying: the subject under discussion is 'a very difficult question and one intelligible to few'; in such circumstances, confusion readily multiplies.¹² From these observations, we can appreciate how the presumed intellectual disparity between the correspondents threatens to overshadow the properly monastic context of this event. Valentine's well-mannered disavowal of superior intellect notwithstanding, the correspondence provides no reason for assuming that a pack of half-wits had stumbled into matters completely beyond their grasp. An ill-focused attention on putative differences in intellect can keep us from recognising that the earliest stages of the Pelagian controversy in Africa unfolded in an exchange amongst monks – Augustine in Hippo, Valentine in Hadrumetum, Evodius in Uzala.

¹⁰ (Chadwick 1955), pp. 176-179

¹¹ Valentine *ap.* Augustine, *ep* 216.1 (CSEL 57.396.15-16): '... quia per rusticitatem fratrum nostrorum nostro iudicio erubuimus...'; 216.3 (298.8-12): 'Cooperunt memorati fraters, qui omnia subuerterunt, innocentum animas commouere mea paruitate penitus ignorante in tantum conuentus illorum murmurantis nescii, ut, nisi frater Florus de Carthagine repedans eorum perturbations agnoscens mihi sollicite nuntiasset...' (The text is lacunose here). Valentine's claim that the innocent were distressed, and his protestations of ignorance about the affair, are hardly a solid basis for claiming that the monks at Hadrumetum were a rustic bunch of simpletons.

¹² Cf. Augustine, *ep* 214.6 (CSEL 57.385.4-7): 'aut enim [Florus] non intellegit librum meum aut forte ipse non intellegitur, quando difficillimam quaestionem et paucis intellegibilem soluere atque enodare conatur.'

Indeed, when Abbot Valentine writes that he ‘needed not inquire after [Augustine’s] sanctity and knowledge, which were known to [him] by God’s grace’, we can infer that Augustine’s monastic reputation had preceded him.¹³ And this inference is surely confirmed inasmuch as Valentine ends his letter with an appeal to Augustine’s monastic authority. ‘But if Brother Florus, the servant of Your Holiness, puts forward anything for the monastery’s rule, we beseech you, Father, that you deign to accept it willingly and teach us poor ones in everything.’¹⁴ Along with his request for direction in theology, then, Valentine appeals for direction in monasticism. So together these monks discussed and, it would seem,¹⁵ put to rest problems of relating God’s grace to Christian *askesis* within the developing framework of African monastic theology. To judge from Valentine’s letter, the *rusticus* abbot not only grasped the subtleties of Augustine’s message, he also endorsed them.¹⁶ In other words, Augustine’s treatises on grace, which often seem to modern scholars to be the

¹³ Valentinus *ap.* Augustine, *ep* 216.1 (CSEL 57.397.5-7): ‘non enim erat nobis necessarium interrogare de beatitudine et de sapientia tua, quae est nobis nota per domini gratiam.’ We might find a similar sign of deference to Augustine’s authority as a monk and theologian (not to mention bishop) of the first order in Aurelius’ referral to Augustine of the recalcitrant monks for whom Augustine wrote *op mon* (1.1); cf. the remarks of J. Saint-Martin, (Saint-Martin 1949), p. 310: ‘mais plus homme d’action qu’homme de doctrine, il [sc., Aurélius] crut mieux faire en demandant à son grand ami, l’évêque d’Hippone, de diriger cette controverse avec sa double autorité de moine et d’évêque.’

¹⁴ Valentinus *ap.* Augustine, *ep* 216.6 (CSEL 57.402.23-25): ‘Si quid autem famulus tuae sanctitatis frater suggererit Florus, pro regula monasterii digneris, pater, petimus, libenter accipere et per omnia nos infirmos instruere.’ Note Valentine’s greetings to ‘omnes filios apostolatus tui dominos nostros clericos ac sanctos in congregatione propositi seruientes’ (402.16-19). Similarly, Augustine concludes his letter to Valentine with the following remarks, *ep* 214.7, 387.9-11: ‘saluto uos non solum meo nomine sed etiam fratrum, qui me cum sunt, et rogo, ut pro nobis concorditer atque instanter oretis’. These are two clear references to the monastic clergy leaving with him. Therefore Kasper is quite wrong when he writes of this correspondence, (Kasper 1989), p. 156, ‘Sie berühren ihre Lebenspraxis nicht und damit schient auch die damit verbundene Thematik nicht relevant zu sein.’ This conveys far too lean a sense of the importance of monastic context in which the exchange occurred.

¹⁵ (Rees 1988), p. 103: ‘We may assume therefore that peace returned to Hadrumetum as a result of Augustine’s efforts and that he could dismiss the incident as no more than a storm in a teacup.’ Cf. (Brown 2000), p. 399-403

¹⁶ Augustine’s correspondence with the monks at Hadrumetum appears to have reached a satisfactory dénouement. We may plausibly conjecture that the *rustici* in the end sanctioned Augustinian theology on the points under discussion.

signature products of his prodigious mind,¹⁷ were intelligible to his monastic peers in Northern Africa precisely because they reflected an interpretation of Christianity common to the brilliant and the backward alike.¹⁸

This should come as no surprise to us, when we recall that Augustine anchored his theology in his decidedly ascetic experience of Christianity. We see this clearly from the ease with which Augustine applied precisely the same critical vocabulary to articulate his position on grace and freedom that he used to describe Catholic monasticism.¹⁹ Our monks at Hadrumetum contented themselves with Augustine's account not because they were overawed by his intellectual calibre and episcopal dignity (after all, they were astute enough to sniff out the problems in his system, and bold enough to challenge them). Rather, they ultimately found his explanations congenial because they shared with Augustine in the monastic life, from which Augustine's theology derived and to which it applied.²⁰

- Similarities in the exegetical foundations of monasticism

Having parenthetically considered the episode at Hadrumetum, let us return to our primary theme of the monastic culture that bound together Augustine and Cassian. Perhaps it would be most sensible to begin with some of the commonplaces that united them. These corresponding points are unexceptional, to be sure, constituting

¹⁷ Cf. (Lorenz 1966), pp. 41-42: 'Sein Bericht über die römischen Klöster [Mor 1.32.70-73] enthält in Wahrheit ein theologisches Programm: die Verschmelzung von Mönchtum und Paulinismus.' (emp. added); see also (Fry 1981), pp. 59-64.

¹⁸ The work of Gerald Bonner has largely established that Augustine's thought is in fact continuous with the tradition that he and his peers inherited; e.g., (Bonner 1967).

¹⁹ George Lawless's verdict is relevant in this connection, (Lawless 1987), p. 161: 'Here are no musings of an armchair theologian; here is no romanticization of common life; here is no utopian exegesis of Acts 4: 32-5. Augustine's vocabulary is that of a seasoned practitioner. His monastic writings bear comparison with the best of the autobiographical passages from his talented pen.' Cf. (Markus 1990a)

merely a prologue to their more interesting similarities. Even here, however, we will notice differences in some of the particulars. For example, Augustine as well as Cassian describes the monastic life in language borrowed from the book of Num 20.17, wherein Moses appeals to the King of Edom for right of passage. ‘Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country. We will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells. *We will go by the King’s highway, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left*, until we have passed thy borders.’²¹ Both of them interpret Psalm 133 (‘Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell in unity....’) as a prophetic foreshadowing of Christian monasticism.²² Likewise, both of them employ maritime imagery in speaking of the monastery, though to somewhat different ends.²³

For Cassian, the monastery is the ‘port of silence’ to which the eager monk retires from the ‘stormy deeps’; Cassian favours this haunting metaphor when concluding a lengthy conversation.²⁴ One thinks especially of the majestic conclusion to the *Conferences*, where Cassian writes, *Superest ut me periculosissima hactenus tempestate silenti portum spiritalis orationum vestrarum aura comitetur*: ‘It only remains for me, by the breath of your prayers, to be committed from the storm, till

²⁰ Cf. (Ladner 1954), p. 352-356.

²¹ Moses later makes the same appeal to Sihon, king of the Amorites: Num. 21.21. Cassian, *inst* 12.4, *conl.* 2.24, 4.12.5, 6.9.3, 24.24.5-6, 25.2, cf. 2.16.2 (*via regia*); see (Ramsey 1997), p. 174. Augustine, *pec mer* 2.35.57 (CSEL 60.125-126); *ep* 215.5-8 (CSEL 57.391-396); cf. *en Ps* 90 s.1.4.1-17 (CCL 39.1256-1257); *qu* 4.2, 4.38, 4.50, 5.48 (CSEL 28(2).314-315, 350, 357-359, 407-409); Possidius, *u Aug* 22.1.7-8, (Pellegrino 1955), p. 120: *nec ad dextram nec ad sinistram declinare*. Jerome, *c Pel* prol. 2, cf. 2.22 (PL 23.497, 559) and Faustus of Riez, *grat* 1.4, 1.8 (PL 58.789, 794), as well as Augustine and Cassian (*conl* 2.2.4), employ this curious phrase by way of asserting that Pelagius has indeed strayed from the path. For an exhaustive examination of the *regia via*, see (Tailliez 1947). Djuth, (Djuth 1999), presents the *via regia* as a cipher in monastic theology for ‘a principle of moderation’, and this it certainly is. She then draws the conclusion that Augustine and Cassian invoked the metaphor at cross-purposes. But she neglects the passages from Augustine cited above which are redolent with imagery the critical verses from Numbers, and cites only cases in which he refers to the *recta via*.

²² Cassian, *conl* 16.3.4-5; cf. *inst* 9.3; Augustine, *en Ps* 132, 3-6 (CCL 40.1927-1931). On Augustine, see (Solignac 1987) and (Verheijen 1975).

²³ On this trope in classical and Christian literature, see (Bonner 1941).

now quite perilous, to the harbour of reverent silence.’²⁵ On the other hand, Augustine’s metaphor is subtler, reminding us that the harbour’s breakwaters do not keep out every storm and, regrettably, even there the ships are occasionally dashed against each other.²⁶ Cassian of course was familiar with this rough and tumble aspect of cenobitic life, as many passages in his writing attest.²⁷ In the end, of course, both of them considered this sort of conflict salubrious. Without it, monks are acutely exposed to the dangers of spiritual complacency.²⁸

On a rather more sophisticated note, both our authors looked to the same scripture, Acts 4.32-5, when describing the earliest Christians as *de facto* monks. This reading proved enormously useful to both for setting their own monastic programmes. Both, for example, grounded their doctrines of apostolic poverty on this passage.²⁹ But here again, subtle differences emerge. For Cassian, Luke’s history is important for describing the lofty state from which Christians fell into a worldly mediocrity and therefore to which the *miles Christi* struggles to attain.³⁰ For Augustine, the significance of the passage is not so much historical as exhortatory: voluntary renunciation among the earliest Christians allowed them to live in perfect

²⁴ (Ramsey 1997), p. 33

²⁵ Cassian, *conl* 24.26.19; cf. *inc* pref. 1, 7.1.1

²⁶ Augustine, *en Ps* 99, 9-11 (CCL 39.1398-1400)

²⁷ E.g., Cassian, *inst* 4.30, 4.39; *conl* 16.23, 18.15.1-16.5, 19.9.1-10.2, 19.12.1-4, 19.14.3-5, 24.19; cf. *inst* 12.32-33

²⁸ Cassian, *conl* 24.19; Augustine, *en Ps* 54, 16 (CCL 39.668-669); cf. (Brown 2000), p. 222: ‘For, as Augustine saw it, the Donatists had solved the problem of evil in the men around them, merely by refusing to establish any relationship with it. They had withdrawn from contact with an “unclean” society into a coterie of their equals.’

²⁹ Cassian, *inst* 4.4, cf. 5.10, 7.21; Augustine, *s* 355-356 (PL 39.1568-1581); cf. Possidius, *u Aug* 5.1.5-7, (Pellegrino 1955), p. 52. Augustine’s use of this passage extended well beyond simply establishing his monks’ vow of poverty on it. This scripture was programmatic for him, expressing some of his most deeply held convictions about the social life of Christians – of which the monks were exemplars. See (Berrouard 1987); (Solignac 1987); (Verheijen 1979). Solignac writes, ‘*La vie monastique est [...] l’idéal et le modèle de la vie chrétienne tout court, de la «vie en Christ», par laquelle les chrétiens sont unis au Christ dans l’Esprit et unis entre eux*’ (p. 386, emp added).

³⁰ Cassian, *inst* 2.5; *conl* 18.5.1-4, 21.30.2; cf. *inst* 12.32.2; *conl* 12.2.5, 16.6.4. See (Chadwick 1968), pp. 51-52; (Markus 1990b), pp. 165-168, 181; (Ramsey 1997), pp. 629-630; (Rousseau 1978), pp. 56-67. It is a tricky business to know how best to take this material. Since Cassian supplies very little evidence for how he thinks of Christians ‘in the world’ (see below), I would resist interpreting this

charity – ‘go and do thou likewise’.³¹ In this instance, although the emphasis differs in their respective exegeses of the Bible, they both used the same critical text as a charter for similar monastic programmes of Christian rigor.

They also both preferred another Lukan passage, the classic tale of Mary and Martha (Luke 10.38-42), to justify ascetic contemplation.³² In this connection, it is worth mentioning that Cassian quotes the text in an interesting variant: ‘But *few things are* needful, even one.’³³ Cassian makes very good use of this reading by turning the story into an allegory for the tripartite spiritual progress so beloved of his master, Evagrius Ponticus.³⁴ Meanwhile, Augustine keeps to a more conservative interpretation.³⁵ Mary straightforwardly represents the *uita contemplatiua*, while Martha anxiously personifies the *uita actiua*. And while Cassian’s ‘one thing’ is clearly the contemplation of God, Augustine’s account of what the ‘one thing’ is adds a shade of nuance, by linking the contemplation of God and Christian unity.³⁶

element of his thought as evidence for ‘monasticism-*qua*-organised protest against the ‘Establishment’.’

³¹ Augustine, *reg* 3.1.3, (Verheijen 1967), 1.418; cf. (Lorenz 1966), pp.46, 56-57; (Verheijen 1979).

³² (Csányi 1960). In the Nestorian controversy, Martha also serves Cassian well as a witness to Jesus Christ’s divinity, because He is the ‘son of the Living God’ (John 11.27): *inc* 3.11, 6.19.2, 7.10.1.

³³ Cassian, *conl* 1.8, ‘et tamen quid audit a domino? Martha, Martha, sollicita es et turbaris erga plurima: *paucis* uero opus est *aut etiam uno*.’ (emp. added). Both the Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Vaticanus contain this variant. Origen, Basil and Jerome also cite it in this form. See Baker’s comprehensive survey and analysis provided: (Baker 1965). Given that, amongst the Latin Fathers, only Cassian and Jerome quote the passage in this form, it is perhaps something they learnt while in the East. See also (Aland 1994), p. 247; (Constable 1995); and (Solignac 1980).

³⁴ Evagrius himself does not interpret the passage in this way. At *rer mon rat* 3 (PG 40.1253), he moralises the story: Martha was too concerned about food, et c.... Origen’s comments on this passage survive in *frag* 72 ((Rauer 1998), pp. 520-522). For Origen, the *pauca* are the commandments; and the *unum necessarium* is the greatest of them – ‘Love thy neighbour.’ He does, however, explicitly identify Mary as *theoria*, Martha as *praxis*. In any event, I would contend that Cassian’s reading makes sense only within the theological tradition of Evagrius and Origen. For a discussion of the Evagrian/Origenist exegesis, see (Marsili 1936); (Munz 1960); (Stewart 1998), pp. 49-55. Cf. also Augustine, *conf* 10.29.40, (O’Donnell 1992), pp. 134-135.

³⁵ Augustine, *b coniug* 8.8 (CSEL 41.198-199); *s* 103-104 (PL 38.613-618); *qu eu* 2.20 (CCL 44B.64: here, Martha ‘significat ecclesiam quae nunc est,’ while Mary ‘significat eandem ecclesiam, sed in futuro saeculo.’); (Zumkeller 1986), pp. 177-181, 194-197.

³⁶ See esp. Augustine, *s* 103.3.4-5.6, PL 38.614-616

Reflecting on this *locus classicus* for Christian contemplation brings us to another theme dear to both Cassian and Augustine: the necessity for monks' labour.³⁷ It may seem trite to note that they both endorsed manual labour in the monastic life, since this position found widespread support throughout ancient Christianity.³⁸ Nevertheless, its successful adoption seems obvious to us only with the benefit of hindsight. But the great profusion of literary output bolstering it demonstrates the great effort required to argue against the obvious implication of Lk 10.38ff. This is a lesson Cassian himself had to learn, as he relates in Conference 24: he and Germanus fell to the notion that they could pray more effectively by repudiating labour and receiving support from others!³⁹ Cassian and Augustine's validation of monastic labour makes better sense as a response to a concrete situation, rather than as a prophetic denunciation of some latent possibility. Furthermore, their arguments need not be understood as a shoring up, or drumming up, of resistance against an exotic, imported strain of monasticism, as some scholars have suggested.⁴⁰ Indeed, in Cassian's case in particular, some scholars have argued that he directed his arguments against the monastic scheme established locally by Martin of Tours.⁴¹

³⁷ It should be noted that they did not embrace this as a universal necessity. Both recognised that a variety of circumstances could make it impractical for a monastic to engage in manual labour – e.g., old age, sickness, or even former social status! See Augustine, *reg* 3.3.3-4, (Verheijen 1967), 1.421-422; *op mon* 15.16-16.17, 29.37 (CSEL 41.556-562, 586-589); and Cassian, *inst* 5.39 (the unforgettable tale of Symeon the Italian scribe who, unfit for manual labour, is gainfully employed by a holy elder to copy out St Paul's epistles in Latin – though the language was altogether unknown there); *conl* 11.4.1

³⁸ (Draguet 1949), pp. xxxviii-xl, xlv; (Guillaumont 1979b); (Ramsey 1997), p. 820; (Stewart 1998), p. 17

³⁹ Cf. *apoph* Poemen 186 (PG 65.368)

⁴⁰ Georges Folliet has argued that the trouble-makers in question were actually Messalians from the East: (Folliet 1957), p. 398. Noting the similarities between these groups, he writes, 'Le parallèle est trop frappant' (p. 390). (Folliet hedges his claim a bit: 'A s'en tenir au *De opere monachorum*, nos moines de Carthage ne connaissaient du messalianisme que les pratiques; il se pourrait que nous n'ayons affaire qu'à un type déterminé de messaliens' (p. 393). This being admitted, one might be pardoned for wondering whether Folliet's claim has any meaning left at all!) Ingenious though his suggestion may be, it seems unnecessary. It is far more parsimonious, if far less clever, to suppose that the problems came from sloth rather than Syria.

⁴¹ E.g., E.-Ch. Babut found Cassian's silence about Martin very suspicious; he also inaugurated several generations of scholarship according to which Cassian's putative rejection of the miraculous (about which I have doubts; see fn 79-80, below) is an invidious challenge to Sulpicius Severus's account of the famously thaumaturgical Martin: (Babut 1912), pp. 13-14, 17 and esp. 17 n. 1. See also (Lorenz

For undermining this temptation to live on the charity of others, Cassian adopted a twofold strategy. In the first instance, he explicitly broadened his definition of prayer to encompass manual labour as a sort of prayerful endeavour.⁴² On this front, Cassian seems to be indebted to the expanded understanding of prayer adopted by Origen, as a measure for explaining how Christians can ‘pray ceaselessly.’⁴³ He insists that the incomparable Fathers of Scetis ‘believed that they would gain a higher vista for spiritual contemplation, to the extent that they were more faithfully intent on the toils of asceticism and zeal of labour.’⁴⁴ Secondly, he implicitly rejected the possibility of compartmentalising the monastic life into one component that was distinctly contemplative, and another that was distinctively active.⁴⁵ By construing contemplation and activity as events rather than as states, Cassian countered any expectation that a permanent cessation of labour should follow the attainment of pure prayer. Once he had accomplished this, Cassian could more easily assert that the ‘prayer’ of labour was appropriate to the advanced no less than to the novice.⁴⁶

As a young man, Augustine cherished hopes of a gentleman’s life of retired contemplation and *askesis*, hopes not entirely unlike the plan Cassian and Germanus confided to Abba Abraham. But circumstance cheated Augustine of the *Christianae*

1966), p. 18; and (Stewart 1998), pp. 17-18. On the other hand, C. Stancliffe sensibly expresses doubt about Cassian’s hostility toward Martin and notes that Babut’s claim rests on conjecture: (Stancliffe 1983), p. 361 n. 68. While the character of Martin’s asceticism is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is appropriate to say I find no reason to put as sharp a point to Cassian’s reforming zeal as other students of Cassian have done; and that in particular I cannot accept arguments based on Cassian’s supposed attitude toward miracles. Cassian’s attitude will be discussed further in fn. 79-80.

⁴² Cassian, *inst* 1.5, 2.12, 2.14, 10.7-14, 10.17-20, 10.21, 10.23; *conl* 24.11.1-12.4; cf. Augustine, *mor* 1.31.67 (PL 32.1338-1339).

⁴³ Origen, *orat* 12.2, (Koetschau 1899), pp. 324.25-325.3: «ἀδιαλείπτως» δὲ προσεύχεται, καὶ τῶν ἔργων τῆς ἀρετῆς ἢ τῶν ἐντολῶν τῶν ἐπιτελουμένων εἰς εὐχῆς ἀναλαμβανομένων μέρος, ὁ συνάπτων τοῖς δέουσιν ἔργοις τὴν εὐχὴν καὶ τῇ εὐχῇ τὰς πρεπούσας πράξεις. οὕτω γὰρ μόνως τὸ «ἀδιαλείπτως προσεύχεσθε» ἐκδέξασθαι δυνάμεθα ὡς δυνατόν ὃν εἰρημένον, εἰ πάντα τὸν βίον τοῦ ἁγίου μίαν συναπτομένην μεγάλην εἵπομεν εὐχὴν...

⁴⁴ Cassian, *inst* 2.12.2, ‘credentes se tanto sublimiorem spiritualium contemplationum puritate mentis intuitum quaesituros, quanto deuotius fuerint erga operis studium ac laboris intenti.’ For ‘asceticism’ as the meaning of *stadium*, see (Lorié 1955): pp. 69-74, 78-80, 98-101. I thank Dom Sheridan for directing my attention to Lorié’s thorough analysis.

⁴⁵ (Stewart 1998), p. 93

uitae otium for which he yearned.⁴⁷ But Augustine reversed his fortune and rendered his loss of leisure more profound by subjecting it to a minute analysis. The church's need that had impressed him into clerical service became for Augustine a powerful consideration with regard to the monastic life, as his correspondence with Eudoxius and his fellow monks at Capraria shows.⁴⁸ But this concern was quite broad, for in rejecting the comforts of Christian retirement he not only legitimated the Church's appeal to the monasteries for servants to ordain, but also he established the case for monastic manual labour.⁴⁹

His argument for this labour was distinctly different from Cassian's, but comparable to it. To deny the need for work was in an important sense to deny the postlapsarian conditions established when Adam was told to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow. 'But it is surely evident that no one escapes this sentence.'⁵⁰ The denial of the need for labour made by some monks therefore revealed a shocking pride, whereby the monk tacitly proclaimed himself – it would appear, by personal dispensation – an inheritor of the full measure of the age to come.⁵¹ The Christian monk must not think to achieve perfection by the sort of spiritual auto-cannibalism that this radical introversion entails. It was on this account presumption indeed – why, the very height of presumption! – for some doubtful monks to claim that, in this

⁴⁶ Prof. Markus provides a very helpful reading on Cassian's use of *theoretikelpraktike* in this connection: (Markus 1990b), pp. 185-189; cf. (Dattrino 1986).

⁴⁷ Augustine, *retr* 1.1 (CSEL 36.11); cf. Possidius, *u Aug* 2.1-4, (Pellegrino 1955), pp. 44-46; (Brown 2000); (Halliburton 1962), pp. 115-127

⁴⁸ Augustine, *ep* 48 (CSEL 34(2).137-140); cf. Possidius, *u Aug* 11.1-3, (Pellegrino 1955), pp. 72-74

⁴⁹ Augustine, *mor* 1.31.67-68, 1.33.70 (PL 32.1338-1340)

⁵⁰ Augustine, *gn adu Man* 2.20.30, PL 34.211: 'sed certe illud manifestum est, quod nemo euadat istam sententiam.' Cf. *Gn lit* 11.38 (CSEL 28(1).373); *en Pss* 26, s. 2.1 and 57, 2.40-41 (CCL 38.154, 39.710: 'experimento disce, quod noluisti praecepto'); s 362.11.11 (PL 39.1617-1618). His attitude is all the more striking for the fact that Augustine recognised in this state of affairs a dire perversion of what God intended labour to be. In *Gn lit* 8.8 (CSEL 28(1).243.4-9), for instance, he muses, 'Quidquid ergo deliciarum habet agricultura, tunc utique longe amplius erat, quando nihil accidebat aduersi uel terrae uel caelo. Non enim erat laboris afflictio, sed exhilaratio uoluntatis, cum ea, quae Deus creauerat, humani operis adiutorio laetius feraciusque prouenirent ...' Hereafter follows a reverie in celebration of natural beauty filled with such enormous joy as to make Horace smile.

regard, they had surpassed St Paul himself, who gloried in providing for his own sustenance (2 Thess 3.8-9).⁵² We should note that both Cassian and Augustine appeal to authoritative examples: St Paul for both, and the Desert Fathers for Cassian as well.

In these several examples, we see the lineaments of a shared monastic tradition that informed both Augustine and Cassian. Though divergences have already appeared, they have been superficial and largely explicable in topical terms. This was perhaps not the case when we turned to Cassian's characteristically Evagrian reading of Lk 10.38-42. In this instance, Cassian's exegesis represents a tradition foreign to Augustine, and this distinctive element was crucial for his interpretation. Still, as we have seen, both of our authors interpreted the passage with an eye toward a common set of concerns that was unaffected by differences in their theoretical orientation. In any event, the affinities of Cassian and Augustine are not limited to these rather minimal similarities. Other parallels that are far more striking also occur. To these we shall now turn.

- Parallels in theology and asceticism

Both of our 'monk-theorists' asserted the eschatological orientation of the monastic undertakings they pursued.⁵³ Careful attention to this theme helps us appreciate some striking affinities between the two. For example, monasticism as the

⁵¹ We might recall in this connection Augustine's linking of Adam's curse to Christ's blessing in *s* 362 (PL 39.1611-1634); cf. *pecc mer* 2.33.53 (CSEL 60.123); *c ep Pel* 4.8.22 (CSEL 60.544-546).

⁵² Such is the burden of Augustine's *op mon*; cf. Augustine, *ep* 262 (CSEL 57.621-631): Two itinerant monks of dubious provenance convinced Ecdicia to live as a widow – to the great and understandable distress of her husband – having given them all, or nearly all, of her possessions (*ep* 262.5, CSEL 57.624.18-625.1): 'omnia uel paene omnia, quae habebas, nescio quibus duobus transeuntibus monachis tamquam pauperibus eroganda donaueris.' Augustine, who was left to clear up the mess, was also understandably distressed.

⁵³ See (Chadwick 1991), p. 12; (Markus 1990b), pp. 185-189; (Stewart 1998), p. 40; (Zumkeller 1986), pp. 120-124; 242-243

uita angelica,⁵⁴ a theme we have come to expect in Cassian, is also present in Augustine.⁵⁵ For both, it was critical to assert that contemporary ascetics had succeeded (if only fleetingly) in realising the blessedness of the Age to Come.⁵⁶ Augustine would lodge this claim quite forcefully against his Manichaean rivals as incontrovertible proof for his claims of the Catholic Church.⁵⁷ Thus, we are not surprised to find that he often depicts the angelic life precisely as communal life within the Church, or, as he puts it in *The City of God*, the *socialis uita sanctorum*⁵⁸ – a life all Christians are called to live, a life exemplified by monastic Christians.⁵⁹ Cassian employed the powerful metaphor more subtly, but with an intention no less urgent. Here we find Cassian talking of the Desert Fathers as angels in the flesh so as to assert very robustly the possibility of attaining this lofty state.⁶⁰ If Augustine's use

⁵⁴ (Frank 1964); (Lamy 1963); (Nagel 1966)

⁵⁵ Cassian, *conl* 9.6.5: 'Cumque mens tali fuerit tranquillitate fundata uel ab omnium carnalium passionum nexibus absoluta, et illi uni summoque bono tenacissima adhaeserit cordis intentio, apostolicum illud implebit 'Sine intermissione orate', et 'In omni loco leuantes puras manus sine ira et disceptatione'. Hac enim puritate, si dici potest, sensu mentis absorto ac de terreno situ *ad spiritalem atque angelicam similitudinem* reformato quidquid in se receperit, quidquid tractauerit, quidquid egerit, purissima ac sincerissima erit oratio.' Cf. (Stewart 1998), p. 56; Augustine, *ep* 150 (PL 33.645): Congratulating Proba and Juliana Anicia on Demetrias' consecration as a holy virgin, Augustine writes, 'Generosius quippe elegit Aniciana posteritas tam illustrem familiam beare nuptias nesciendo, quam multiplicare pariendo, et in carne jam imitari *uitam Angelorum*, quam ex carne adhuc numerum augere mortalium.' Cf. (Zumkeller 1986), pp. 122. According to Augustine, this is not a vocation exclusive to monks. It is clear from *ciu* 22.1 (CSEL 40(2).581-583) that all Augustine's saints live in a community that emulates the 'angelic life' precisely in that their union is founded upon contemplating God.

⁵⁶ Constable has noted that, 'by the fathers,' contemplation was seen 'as brief glimpses of divinity and the life to come': (Constable 1995), p. 86. The classic account where Augustine relates the transience of this experience is the famous vision at Ostia, esp. at *conf* 9.10.25, (O'Donnell 1992), pp. 113-114. See too Prof. Louth's thought-provoking remarks indicating the relevance for Augustinian monasticism and mysticism of this event, the importance of which was not least that it was an experience Augustine and Monica shared: (Louth 1981), pp. 134-137.

⁵⁷ Cf. Augustine, *diu qu* 59.4 (CCL 44A.117-118); *en Pss* 9, 12 and 132, 5 (CCL 38.64, 40.1929-1930); *ep* 147.5.13 (CSEL 44.285-286); *Gn lit* 11.23 (CSEL 28(1).355-356); *eu Io tr* 18.7 (PL 35.1539-1540); *uirg* 4.4, 13.13, 24.24, 53.54 (CSEL 41.237-238, 245-246, 258-260, 299-300)

⁵⁸ Augustine, *ciu* 19.5; cf. 15.16 (CSEL 40(2).380-381, 98.16-22). Elsewhere, Augustine uses exactly this phrase to describe the monastic life; e.g., *s* 356.14, PL 39.1580: 'Dixeram enim, et scio me dixisse, ut si nolint suscipere socialem uitam me cum non illis tollerem clericatum; seorsum manerent, seorsum uiuerent, quomodo possint deo uiuerent.' Cf. (Ladner 1959), pp. 361-362.

⁵⁹ The matter of precisely how Augustine conceived of Christian monastics relating to other Christians will be considered below. At present, suffice it to say that I consider Augustine's references to the *socialis uita sanctorum* in his specifically monastic writings and in *De ciuitate dei* to be mutually illuminating.

⁶⁰ Cassian, *conl* 9.6.5, 10.7.3, 19.5.1; cf. *inst* 5.14.4, *conl* 9.2.1. The contrast with this passage by Sulpicius Severus is amusing: *dial* 1.4.6, (Halm 1866), p. 156.21-24: 'Sed facis inhumane, qui nos

of Acts 4.32-5 is exhortatory, the same is true of Cassian's use of the angelic way of life.⁶¹

Of course, the actual enjoyment of the *eschaton*, here and now, was rather problematic for anyone who did not want to be committed to asserting (in principle, at least) the complete perfectibility of the human person, here and now. But, since the two made common cause against Pelagianism as a misconceived, though doubtless attractive (and therefore dangerous), form of Christian piety,⁶² we can reasonably infer that neither of them wanted their arguments interpreted in that way. As we noted earlier, both Cassian and Augustine explicitly characterised 'the angelic life' as altogether extraordinary, the full fruition of which can only be realised in 'the life of the age to come.'⁶³ This means they deferred the ultimate attainment of perfection to a post-mortem state. Prof. Robert Markus has rightly observed of Cassian, in words no less applicable to Augustine, that 'Mary in the Gospel story lived this fragmentary anticipation of the contemplative life; by living it, her life was a sign which pointed to its eschatological fulfilment.'⁶⁴ For neither of them, then, was sinlessness while still living this life an attainable goal. To be sure, the grosser sins can and must be avoided, but anyone convinced that he has no sin is not only a liar, he is also a blasphemer who makes a lie of the Lord's Prayer.⁶⁵ In this connection, their use of Ecclesiasticus 11.30 becomes all the more poignant: 'Do not praise any man before

Gallos homines cogis exemplo angelorum uiuere [!]: quamquam ego studio manducandi etiam angelos manducare credam: nam istud dimidium hordeacium timeo uel solus adtingere.'

⁶¹ Cf. (Didier 1954), p. 41: 'De tout cela il se dégage incontestablement une certitude et une exigence: la nature humaine est marquée, jusque dans son élément le plus charnel, par la grâce du Christ et le corps trouve place dans l'ordre nouveau qu'installe sa résurrection; – mais alors, comment le chrétien qui voit resplendir dans son corps de chair une anticipation de sa résurrection dans le Christ, pourrait-il se comporter avec ce corps de la même façon qu'un païen?'

⁶² (Brown 1972b); (Brown 1972c); (Markus 1989); (Rébillard 1994); cf. (Ladner 1954), pp. 870-871.

⁶³ Cf. Augustine, *cons eu* 1.5 (CSEL 43.8.6-10): 'ac per hoc in hac uita mortali illa est in opere bonae conuersationis, ista uero magis in fide et aput perpaucos per speculum in enigmatē et ex parte in aliqua uisione incommutabilis ueritatis.'

⁶⁴ (Markus 1990b), p. 187

⁶⁵ Cassian, *conl* 9.22, 22.13, 23.18; Augustine, *ep* 4*.4 (CSEL 88.27-28)

his death.’⁶⁶ There is a considerable debate on the nature and motivation of Cassian’s affirmation of *apatheia*.⁶⁷ Whatever Cassian and Augustine may have thought about *apatheia*,⁶⁸ it is clear that they agreed on the practical impossibility of sinlessness.⁶⁹

Turning from the lofty to the pedestrian, there is another important corollary of the angelic life: since they both regarded the attainment of this status as fleeting and altogether uncommon, it comes as no surprise that a certain moderation, even ‘humaneness’ should characterise their respective approaches to ascetic practice.⁷⁰ Augustine, for all his admiration of the stunning feats of the Desert Fathers, counsels no such perfection for his flock.⁷¹ Meanwhile Cassian, an eyewitness to radical austerities, offers appreciably more circumspect advice.⁷² They both judged the forms of self-mortification associated with the Fathers of Syria⁷³ and Egypt that so enthralled John Moschus⁷⁴ and so offended Edward Gibbon⁷⁵ to be out of place and

⁶⁶ Cassian, *conl* 6.16.2; Augustine, *en Ps* 99, 12.31-33 (CCL 39.1400). All the more interesting on this account is Cassian’s *inc* 7.27, where he cites Augustine, who was still living at the time, as an authority; see (Casiday 2001a).

⁶⁷ (Colish 1985), pp. 118-120; (Draguet 1949), pp. xlix-liv; (Sheridan 1997a); (Sheridan 2000); cf. (Stewart 1998), pp. 56-57

⁶⁸ At *ciu* 14.9 (CSEL 40(2).21.7-8), Augustine endorses a limited definition of *apatheia* (*viz.*, ‘rectam rationem sequantur istae affectiones’) that is congenial to Cassian’s teachings on *puritas cordis* and that is almost certainly more in line with the moral philosophical tradition of the term. But immediately thereafter (22.10-15), Augustine writes, ‘Quocirca illa, quae *apatheia* Graece dicitur (quae si Latine posset impassibilitas diceretur), si ita intellegenda est (in animo quippe, non in corpore accipitur), ut sine his affectionibus uiuatur, quae contra rationem accidunt mentemque perturbant, bona plane et maxime optanda est, sed nec ipsa huius est uitae.’ Cf. (Casiday 2001b); (Sheridan 2000), pp. 299-303; (Zumkeller 1986), p. 221.

⁶⁹ Cassian, *conl* 23; Augustine, *ep* 4*.4 (CSEL 88.27-28); *uirg* 48.48-49.50 (CSEL 41.293-296); *perf ius* (PL 44.291-318); see also (Sheridan 1997a), pp.288 fn. 7 and 310 fn. 120.

⁷⁰ (Chadwick 1991), p. 21; cf. (Weaver 1996), p. 76; (Zumkeller 1986), p. 232

⁷¹ Augustine, *mor* 1.31.65-33.73, esp. 1.33.71-72 (PL 32.1337-1341)

⁷² Cassian, *inst* pref.; *conl* 1 pref. 6-7; cf. *inst* 5.4. See (Stewart 1998), p. 28.

⁷³ For a concise introduction to the history of Syrian asceticism, see (Brock 1984).

⁷⁴ John Moschus, *Pratum spirituale* 19, 21, 86, 92, 129, 154, 159, 221 (on ‘grazers’: βόσχοι); and 57, 129 (on stylites): PG 87(3).2865-2868, 2944, 2949-2952, 3021-3024, 3028, 3101-3104; 2912, 2993-2996. Moschus (*Pr spir* 57) relates the unfortunate death of Abba Symeon the Stylite due to a risk associated with the stylite vocation not often considered: he was struck by lightning!

⁷⁵ Gibbon’s Chapter XXXVII is a *tour-de-force* attack against Christian monasticism, written in his superb prose. He rather typically writes, ‘These unhappy exiles from social life were impelled by the dark and implacable genius of superstition.’ The section in which he fulminates against outlandish asceticism is a veritable catalogue of the wonders related by Moschus. See (Gibbon 1898), pp.62, 72-75. Peers’ remark on sanjuanist asceticism, while directed at a different audience, deserves repeating in this connection, (Peers 1943), p. 155: ‘For so long as [San Juan’s teaching’s] ideal of self-sacrifice

inappropriate in the Occident. Possidius lovingly describes the moderate austerities observed by Augustine and his fellows, silver spoons and all,⁷⁶ and Augustine's *Rule* bears out his description. It was the acquisition and cultivation of communal charity, and not grim and prodigious demonstrations of holiness, that Augustine longed to implement.⁷⁷ Across the Mediterranean, Cassian measured up to his own standards of discretion by ever so judiciously advising his correspondents as to the application of Egyptian principles in the blustery south of Gaul.⁷⁸ Some have appreciated Cassian's apparently modern sensibility in eschewing the miraculous.⁷⁹ But this is inaccurate. Cassian frequently showcases the greatest of all miracles – the gradual reconfiguration of the human into the proper image and likeness of God.⁸⁰

For all this, both our authors cherished for their followers an even nobler aspiration than achieving an angelic way of life, for 'are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' (Heb. 1.14)

was regarded from a Victorian easy-chair, it looked like mere barren and pointless asceticism, to a modern and enlightened civilization quite unintelligible.'

⁷⁶ Possidius, *u Aug* 22.1-7, (Pellegrino 1955), pp. 118-122

⁷⁷ Sr. Agatha Mary, SPB, has shown this with remarkable clarity in her exceptionally lucid exposition of the *Rule*: (Agatha Mary 1992), e.g. at pp. 117-120.

⁷⁸ Cassian, *inst* pref., *conl*. 15

⁷⁹ Cuthbert Butler, (Butler 1967), p. 204, obliquely praised Cassian for this 'marked sobriety in regard to supernatural occurrences.' Cf. (Chadwick 1955), pp. 218-219; (Chadwick 1968), pp. 50-51; (Stewart 1998), pp. 17, 31-32. This stems from Cassian's avowed intention to omit all references to miraculous occurrences from his writings (see *inst* pref. 7). This decision is perhaps a polemical one (see references in fn. 41), though I would prefer to take it as primarily a pedagogical device – miracles can be very distracting from the point at hand, and so they are best passed over.

However, it must be noted that Cassian was no stranger to miracles, and even claims to have witnessed '*multae per seniores nostros et incredibilia*': *inst* pref. 7 (emp. added). So modern suspicious about miracles (à la Hume) are not at work in these writings. Furthermore, despite his explicit intentions to omit such things, Cassian does in fact bring into his discussion the phenomenon of divine gifts of miraculous healing – i.e., healing performed by miracle-workers – at *conl* 15.1.2-3. (For what it is worth, the excerpter who digested Cassian's writings for the *Apophthegmata* evidently saw no contradiction in ascribing to him a straight miracle-story in the noblest tradition of less sober ancient works: *apoph* Cassian 2 (PG 65.244).) In light of this evidence from Cassian's writings, we should be clear that when Cassian avoids mentioning miracles, it is not because he does not think they occur. To the contrary, he clearly *does* think miracles occur! Instead, it is because he very sensibly doubts whether sensationalism can edify.

⁸⁰ Cassian, *conl* 12.13.3, 15.8. Parallels in Augustine's writings can be found, e.g., in *conf* 10.4.5-6, 10.27.38-29.40, (O'Donnell 1992), pp. 120-121, 134-135 (with its shocking refrain, 'da quod iubes et iube quod vis'); *s* 131.6-7, PL 28.732-733 (with its the analogical explanation of the Good Samaritan in terms of salvation); and *c ep Pel* 3.3.5 (CSEL 60.490-491.), an account of the effects of baptism: complete purification, but gradual sanctification.

Unlike the angels, Christians will ultimately participate in the divine glory of Jesus Christ. This awesome belief enabled Augustine⁸¹ no less than Cassian⁸² to affirm a Christian doctrine of deification.⁸³ We have come to think of Augustine as generally separated from this notion of deification, and indeed to think of it as a distinctively non-Augustinian belief. Some important modern Orthodox theologians have contributed to this tendency,⁸⁴ claiming the doctrine of *θέωσις* as exclusively the cultural patrimony of Greek Christianity.⁸⁵ In fact, this claim is fatuous.⁸⁶ For our

⁸¹ Augustine, *ciu* 14.4 (CSEL 40(2).9.17-20): 'Quod dicebat: Animales estis, et: Carnales estis, expressius dixit: Homines estis, quod est "Secundum hominem uiuitis, non secundum Deum, secundum quem si uiueretis, di essetis."' Elsewhere I have argued that, in *ciu* 14, the phrase 'uiuere secundum Deum' is implicitly Christological: (Casiday 2001b), pp. 335-337. Christ exemplified 'living according to God's standards'; therefore, if we would live as Christ lived, we would be gods. The process is not only Christological according to Augustine; it is Trinitarian as well. Thus, *f et symb* 9.16, PL 40.189: 'Non enim sunt naturaliter dii, quicumque sunt facti atque conditi ex Patre per Filium dono Spiritus sancti.' They may not be *naturaliter dii*, but they are *dii* nonetheless. For further discussion, see my annotated translation of *s. Dolbeau* 5 ('On psalm 81, "God stood in the synagogue of gods"'): (Casiday 2001c).

⁸² See Cassian, *conl* 9.18.2-3, 11.7.3, 11.9.3-4, 11.12.5-6, 16.13 (the model of deification by adoption is not used here), 21.34.2, 22.6.7-8, 24.26.4

⁸³ On Augustinian deification, see (Bonner 1996a), pp. 369-386; (Bonner 1996b); (Capánaga 1954); (Philips 1971); (Ladner 1954); (Ladner 1959); (Oroz Reta 1993); (Riga 1968); (Teske 1992); (Zumkeller 1986), pp. 27-8, 103; *contra* (Folliet 1962) and (van der Meer 1961), p. 215. For Cassianic adoption-*cum*-deification, see (Marsili 1936), p. 24: 'Con ciò Cassiano al sommo della sua espozione sulla perfezione della carità, tutto fa terminare nell' «adoptio filiorum».' Marsili also addresses this theme at pp. 54, 66; cf. pp 70-71. This provides a solid basis for rejecting Chadwick's premature judgement (absent from the second edition) that Cassian did not teach a doctrine of deification: (Chadwick 1950), p. 148.

⁸⁴ E.g., Myrrha Lot-Borodine writes, (Lot-Borodine 1970), pp. 39-40: 'Toujours attiré par le poids de son désir – *amor meus, pondus meum* – l'esprit augustinien tend de toute la force de ses ailes vers la grâce de la *vision béatifique*, que seule peut lui accorder la «lumière de gloire». Il se sert et se sait ordonné à la *béatitude*, – mais non à la *déification*; celle-ci lui reste interdite, puisqu'il ne peut y avoir, pour Augustin, consubstantialité, donc compénétration, de la nature divine et de la nature humaine.' In light of the numerous passages just cited in which Augustine affirms *deificatio*, one might say what Mme. Lot-Borodine often found occasion to say of some critical passages in the Greek and Byzantine Fathers as regards their modern Catholic interpreters – they were 'inconnus, ou méconnus, par elle.'

⁸⁵ (Azkoul 1986), pp. 61, 166-169; (Azkoul 1990), p. 69 fn. 69, p. 176-7 fn. 81 (a systematic – even indignant – response to (Bonner 1996a)); (Lot-Borodine 1970); (Meyendorff 1974); (Sherrard 1959), pp. 139-164; but, see (Parry 1999). An odd bedfellow is Adolf von Harnack, who seems relieved to report the following, (von Harnack 1990), 5.47-48 fn.1: 'Der Vergottungsgedanke findet sich auch bei den Abendländern, vor allem bei Augustin. Aber wenn ich mich nicht täusche, so hat ihn even derselbe Augustin zu einer erfreulichen Verkümmern gebracht.'

⁸⁶ In general, see (Bonner 1996a), (Bonner 1996b). For medieval Western teachings on deification, see (Constable 1995) and (Kantorowicz 1952) – on 'political' deification, with reference to 12th Century Western Europe, 11th Century Byzantium, and 12th and 16th Century Tsarist Russia. On *Gottförmigkeit* and Lutheran deification, see (Bielfeldt 1997); (Flogaus 1997); (Nygren 1939), 2.2.437-8, 516; and (Posset 1993). The Finnish Lutheran theologian Tuomo Mannermaa makes the following bold claim, (Mannermaa 1983), p. 172: 'Man kann, wenn man will, paraphrasierend die ganze reformatorische Rechtfertigungslehre Luthers (und die ihr eigentümliche Lösung des Verhältnisse zwischen Gerechterklärung und Gerechtmachung) von dem Theosis-Gedanken her verstehen.' For references to

We have noted that Augustine presented his understanding of *deificatio* much more frequently in homilies and exegesis than in his strictly monastic works. Since his treatment overleaps this artificial distinction of his corpus, we can be confident that he intended it to apply both within and without the monastery. But this observation points up a more wide-ranging topic no less worthy of our attention. We should consider what relationship ought to exist between the monastery and the church at large according to Augustine. Was the monastery for Augustine a defiant gesture aimed at the intrusions of secularity into the Holy Church? Did he think of non-monastic Christians as being, in principle, inferior to monastic Christians; and, if so, in what way? These are important questions – too important, in fact, to receive only the summary treatment that we shall give them here. Still it seems clear that, while Augustine did mourn the secularisation of the Church, he mourned even more deeply the sectarian spirit that attempted all too prematurely to separate the wheat from the tares.⁸⁹ This intuition, honed in the Donatist controversy and deployed in the Pelagian controversy, should make us think twice before portraying Augustinian monasticism as a rejection of the non-monastic church.⁹⁰

Now there is no doubt that Augustine considered the monastic vocation superior to that of the non-monastics (a preference he could rightly claim to have learnt from no less an authority than St Paul). Nonetheless, in his overwhelming concern for Christian unity he would not countenance any sort of schism within the community between the two groups. After all, as he could reassuringly remind his congregation (on no less authority than that of Our Lord Himself), ‘In my Father’s house there are many mansions.’ (Jn 14.2)⁹¹ Augustine therefore stressed naturally

⁸⁹ Augustine, *ciu* 1.35, 18.49 (CSEL 40(1).57, 40(2).349-350); *perf ius* 15.35 (PL 44.310); cf. *en Ps* 95.5 (CCL 39.1346-1347)

⁹⁰ Cf. (Zumkeller 1986), p.104

⁹¹ Augustine, *uirg* 26.26 (CSEL 41.262-263); cf. Cassian, *conl* 11.12.7.

enough the continuity that existed between the two, *omnium enim christianorum una respublica est*.⁹² The consecrated virgins assuredly exemplified the Christian life. But for all that, theirs was not an exclusive calling, nor was theirs a separate holiness.⁹³ Rather, monasticism was for Augustine simply a form of ‘concentrated Christianity’⁹⁴. It is important in this connection to recall that Augustine’s monastery served quite literally as a seminary from which the Church throughout North Africa drew her clergy.⁹⁵

The practical bond that linked monastery to world was just as evident, if not more so, in Southern Gaul. The walls of Cassian’s monastery were sufficiently porous to allow monks out – though not so frequently, one presumes, as they allowed novices in – so that they could heed the call of the Church by taking up orders.⁹⁶ From the way Cassian’s monastery functioned as an ‘episcopal seminary,’⁹⁷ it seems highly likely that his notions of how the monastic Christians should relate to lay Christians would approximate to the vision we can ascribe more securely to Augustine. Alas, but for a few fleeting descriptions of exceedingly monastic laypeople,⁹⁸ Cassian rarely gives us a glimpse of how these two populations within the church could, should, or even did co-operate. However, we should recall that

⁹² Augustine, *op mon* 25.33 (CSEL 41.579-580)

⁹³ (Zumkeller 1986), p. 120

⁹⁴ I owe this expression to my colleague, Adam Cooper.

⁹⁵ Possidius, *u Aug* 11.1-4, (Pellegrino 1955), pp. 72-74, testifies that Augustine’s monastery produced about ten such monks-turned-bishops. He writes, *ibid.* 11.3, p. 74: ‘Nam ferme decem, quos ipse noui, sanctos ac uenerabiles uiros continens et doctos beatissimus Augustinus diuersis ecclesiis, nonnullis quoque eminentioribus, rogatus dedit.’ It seems unlikely that he is including himself, though he certainly qualifies. Chiefly from Augustine’s correspondence, Cardinal Pellegrino, p. 208, has drawn up a roster of likely candidates: Alypius of Thagaste, Severus of Milevis, Urbanus of Sicca, Evodius of Uzala, Profuturus of Cirta, Privatus, Servilius, Paul of Cataquas, and Antony of Fussala. See also (Brown 2000), p. 143.

⁹⁶ This seems initially surprising, particularly when we recall that the famous injunction to avoid bishops and women came readily enough from Cassian (*inst* 11.18.1); but see (Rousseau 1996), p. 79. Cassian would have merely been conforming to established Gallic practice in this matter; see (Mathisen 1989), pp. 85-92.

⁹⁷ (Rousseau 1996); cf. (Mathisen 1989), pp. 119-120

Cassian had witnessed the eruption of fierce controversy from perilously close quarters on two occasions.⁹⁹ These events must have been enormously painful, and it is not surprising that so modest a man as Cassian would not share this intimate grief.¹⁰⁰ To draw a tentative conclusion about his beliefs from these observations, we can expect that no more than Augustine would Cassian have favoured ‘rending the body of Christ’ by reserving the dignity of ‘true Christians’ for those within the very narrow compass of the monastic vocation.¹⁰¹

- Organisational and theoretical differences between Augustine and Cassian

For all these similarities, though, we cannot fail to appreciate the inevitable disparities between Cassianic and Augustinian monasticism. These differences are few, but significant nonetheless. However, evaluating the significance of these differences will not be our focus here. Many commentators, since the time of Prosper of Aquitaine, have offered evaluations; but for our purposes, that would be premature insofar as polemic tends to be distracting and our analysis is not yet done. Therefore, though their most famous divergence was, of course, on the matter of grace and freedom, and though discussing this difference is unavoidable, before turning to such a rarefied theme, let us turn our attention to a few, more prosaic cases of difference. This will help us situate the controversy on grace more precisely within the context of Cassian and Augustine’s respective theological outlooks, and will therefore give us a reasonably secure basis for evaluating that difference.

⁹⁸ Cassian, *conl* 14.7; at 18.14.1, Piamun mentions a *religiosae cuiusdam feminae*, who might qualify as another example, if we read this as ‘a certain devout woman’ (though the context could certainly justify reading that as ‘a certain nun’).

⁹⁹ (Rousseau 1996), p. 82

¹⁰⁰ Cf. (Stewart 1998), pp. 12, 15

We might immediately notice that the structures of monastic life that each founder envisioned were quite different. For example, Cassian is unlike Augustine in endorsing both the cenobitic and anchoritic forms of monastic life.¹⁰² Cassian's monasteries also seem to differ from Augustine's in that Cassian clearly describes an initiatory rite for seekers.¹⁰³ (This does not mean, however, that Augustine's monastery lacked a procedure for gaining admittance. It simply means that his *Rule* does not tell us that such a procedure existed. But the *Rule* is hardly an exhaustive blueprint for operating a monastery.) In a similar vein, we might observe that Augustine structures the organisation of his monastery in a way that seems much less authoritarian than Cassian's seems.¹⁰⁴ After all, so mightily does Cassian stress the virtue of obedience, even in the face of absurdity, that modern commentators may find some passages objectionable or even horrifying. (One thinks especially of the silent father, 'Patermutus,' dashing off at the command of his elder to throw his son into the Nile.)¹⁰⁵ But a caveat is in order: it would be premature to find in Augustinian monasticism some foreshadowing of egalitarian democracy simply because its account of leadership strikes us as more palatable.¹⁰⁶ The culminating impression that Cassian's ideal monastery would be ruthlessly exploitative, while Augustine's would be comfortingly collegial, should be resisted. After all, Cassian was explicitly telling would-be monastic founders how best to go about their business; while Augustine was providing spiritual and practical counsel for an existent

¹⁰¹ (de Vogüé 1961), p. 234: 'La signification ecclésiale du monachisme est donc simplement de vivre en plénitude la vie sainte, aimante et priante de l'Église. Il va sans dire qu'une telle formule ne se rencontre nulle part chez Cassien, étranger qu'il est à la problématique qui nous l'inspire.'

¹⁰² (Markus 1990b), pp. 182-184; (Stewart 1998), pp. 30-32, 54; but Verheijen, the great authority on Augustinian monasticism, found no inherent contradiction in the notion of an Augustinian solitary: (Verheijen 1975), pp. 816-817.

¹⁰³ Cassian, *inst* 4.4-7, cf. 4.4.32; see (Penna 1959), pp. 353-355

¹⁰⁴ (Markus 1990b), pp. 164-165

¹⁰⁵ Cassian, *inst* 4.27, cf. 4.24-29, 5.40; *conl* 19.1.1-3. Ramsey is surely right to suggest that the name is programmatic: (Ramsey 2000), pp. 109-10.

¹⁰⁶ Pace (van Bavel 1996), pp. 45-47, 101-105; see (Zumkeller 1986), p. 161

monastery. Even so, the character of cenobitic life as described by Cassian certainly seems more stringent than does the parallel description in Augustine's monastic legislation.

We can be much more confident that our 'theorist-monks' subscribed to different governing paradigms for monasticism. Dom Salvatore Marsili has masterfully established the claim that Cassian owes the framework, and no less the *scopos*, of his explanation of the monastic life to the scheme of contemplation fashioned by his master, Evagrius. But Marsili equally established that Cassian's understanding of contemplation was inextricably bound up with his understanding of *caritas*, Christian love. It was no dusty concern for the endless pondering of those 'men without chests' described so excellently by C S Lewis;¹⁰⁷ nor still was it a flight from the body – though it might easily be misconstrued as such.¹⁰⁸ Rather, *contemplatio* was for Cassian the summation of Christian virtue in its organic, embodied totality – it is the love of God, uniting the Christian to God and fellow Christian.¹⁰⁹ For this very reason, as Fr Bunge has authoritatively demonstrated, it represented Evagrian contemplation at its best.¹¹⁰

For Augustine, the key to monastic life was quite simply the excruciating attempts of *peregrini* to incarnate the *ciuitas Dei* here below.¹¹¹ This City of God is united by God's love and it is thereby characterised by Christian mutual love.¹¹² If

¹⁰⁷ (Lewis 1943), pp. 3-14

¹⁰⁸ Cf. (Colish 1985), pp. 118-120

¹⁰⁹ (Marsili 1936), p. 69: 'Ed allora l'unione stabilita dalla carità tra Padre e figlio [*sic*], non sarà più unione, semplicemente perchè l'immagine dell'uno si ritrova nell'altro, ma piuttosto perchè, per la contemplazione, Dio sarà diventato tutto nel monaco come per la contemplazione stessa è tutto nei santi del cielo. Anzi il Collatore vola più in alto: l'unione che passa tra il Padre e il Figlio nel seno della Trinità santissima, unione che non si basa solo su una somiglianza, ma su una comunione di natura, è data da Cassiano come modello al monaco [*Conl.* X.7.2].'

¹¹⁰ (Bunge 1989), pp. 87-88

¹¹¹ E.g., Augustine, *ciu* 1.35, 10.7, 19.26 (CSEL 40(1).57.18-19, 457, and 40(2).420-421)

¹¹² Augustine, *ciu* 14.28, 15.1, 15.6 (CSEL 40(2).56-60, 66-67); cf. *trin* 7.3.6, PL 42.938: 'Spiritus quoque sanctus siue sit summa charitas utrumque coniugens nosque subiugens, quod ideo non indigne dicitur quia scriptum est: "Deus charitas est" [1 Jn 4.8]....' (Zumkeller 1986), p. 261: 'Because love is

Augustine's *Rule* appears at first blush somehow too easy, we must reread it, for it calls for nothing less than a monumental recasting of human society by a deceptively simple means.¹¹³ Augustine chose to emphasise, not the ordinances governing the community (though, to be sure, he does not neglect this), but rather the forging of those all-important bonds of *caritas* that the existence of any community must presuppose. 'After all, nothing is by vice so quarrelsome, but by nature so social, as the human race.'¹¹⁴ To be sure, Augustine was not for all this soft-headed, any more than Cassian was for his emphasis on contemplation, cold-hearted. The two differed here, but even in their differences both acknowledged the ultimate importance of the love of God.

Speaking of the love of God will bring us, at last, to the convoluted intricacies of grace and freedom and merit. In recent years, a staggering amount of work has been done on the precise relationship of these terms for Cassian.¹¹⁵ The secondary literature on Augustine's doctrine is legion. At present, we will not delve too deeply into these topics: the risk of hopeless distraction is too great. But we can safely draw attention to an important feature of contemporary research into Cassian's teachings. Many modern scholars have quite rightly reconsidered the received opinion that

the soul of Augustinian monasticism, his thinking about community occupies a central place. It is precisely in the community that a true, selfless love is preserved and goes on growing.' The hard sayings in *doctr chr* on 'using' other people and 'loving' God only, should be understood in this way as well: *doctr chr* 3.37 (CSEL 80.89.12-15): 'Caritatem uoco motum animi ad fruendum deo propter ipsum et se atque proximo propter deum; cupiditatem autem motum animi ad fruendum se et proximo et quolibet corpore non propter deum' (emp. added).

¹¹³ As Ladner rightly puts it, (Ladner 1954), p. 877, 'For St. Augustine, as for all orthodox Christians, the Church was and always will be the Body of Christ and the Kingdom of God, in heaven and on earth. But, St. Augustine also fervently desired that at least some of the Christians comprised by the terrestrial Church live in Christian societies on earth which, though «on pilgrimage», would correspond as closely as possible to the eternal *Civitas Dei*. ... [L]ater he found it in a type of monasticism modelled after the common life of the Apostles in Jerusalem as described in Acts.'

¹¹⁴ Augustine, *ciu* 12.28 (CSEL 40(1).613.27-614.1): 'Nihil enim est quam hoc genus tam discordiosum uitio, tam sociale natura.' Cf. *mor* 1.33.71-73 (PL 32.1340-1341); *s* 268.3, 269.2, 271, 356.1 (PL 38.1233, 1235-1236, 1245-1246, 39.1574-1575)

¹¹⁵ (Chadwick 1955); (Chadwick 1968); (Markus 1990b); (Marsili 1936); (Mathisen 1989); (Munz 1960); (O'Keeffe 1994, 1995); (Ramsey 1997); (Rébillard 1994); (Stewart 1998); (Tibiletti 1977); (Weaver 1996)

Cassian was a sloppy theologian who clumsily attempted to repudiate Augustine's teachings by drawing from Eastern traditions.¹¹⁶ Though this has in effect cleared the field, it remains to erect a proper account of Cassian's doctrine in its labyrinthine complexity. For the moment, we will merely want to draw attention to the indisputable fact that Cassian's treatment of grace is far more extensive than traditional wisdom suggests.¹¹⁷

Not only do Conferences 3 and 23 as well as 13 consider this theme in an extended way, Cassian liberally scattered throughout his works numerous references to grace and God's assistance. A tentative synthesis of them suggests five recurrent themes. By transcribing them from their monastic, anecdotal context into a more 'academic' set of theological propositions, we are able to note the following five important claims. First, while God may in fact will the salvation of all, there are very strong reasons – some of them scriptural – to affirm that not all will be saved.¹¹⁸ Second, God's grace initiates, sustains, and perfects human salvation.¹¹⁹ Third, God's grace is quite capable of proactively converting the unwilling.¹²⁰ (When we come to Cassian's reaction to Pelagianism, this affirmation will obviously be of great

¹¹⁶ For a summary, see (Casiday 2001). Victor Codina took a balanced perspective on the matter of Cassian's theological sophistication. Writing on a harsh comparison of Cassian to Evagrius, Codina stated, (Codina 1966), p. 80, '...no es puramente falta de precisión y sutileza filosófica, sino que responde a una diversa postura teológica.'

¹¹⁷ (Stewart 1998), pp. 62-84, has drawn attention to the implicit link in Cassian's writings that binds together his beliefs on sexuality and grace. Significantly, (Zumkeller 1986), pp. 253-256, demonstrates that Augustine forged a similar connection between these two topics.

¹¹⁸ Cassian, *conl* 13.7.2 (though God wills no one to perish, they still perish), 17.16.5-6, 18.16.1, 23.15.2

¹¹⁹ Cassian, *inst* 4.39; *conl* 4.15.2, 5.14.1-2, 5.14.5-15.4, 7.1-2.2, 7.8.2, 8.21.5, 8.23, 8.24.3, 9.7.2, 9.25-26.2, 9.27.1, 9.24.5-6, 10.9.3, 10.10.2, 10.10.4, 10.10.5, 11.9.1-3, 12.4.1-4, 12.5.4, 12.6.3-4, 12.6.8-9, 12.7.6, 12.8.6, 12.9, 12.10.1, 12.12.1-7, 12.15.2-3, 12.16.1, 13.5.1, 13.14.8, 15.2.3, 15.7.1 (a hard passage: *nec quemquam in donis ac mirabilibus dei, sed potius ex propriis virtutum fructibus praedicandum esse censebant, qui industria mentis et operum virtute generantur*. This distinction, though, should be understood according to the dichotomy previously advanced of those who work miracles through virtue (15.1.2) and those who work miracles otherwise (15.1.3). The works are attributed to the first group, notwithstanding the fact that they are *electos quosque ac iustos viros*, accomplishing these things *secundum auctoritatem domini*; cf. 18.1.3), 15.12.2, 17.3-4 (a nice indication of Cassian's ability to sniff out God's grace), 18.13, 19.9.1, 22.6.2-3, 22.7.1-3, 22.8.7, 22.14, 23.10.1; cf. 7.34.1, 9.20.2.

importance.) Fourth, within the context of a life *sub gratia*, people may initiate good actions on their own, which God gratuitously deems meritorious.¹²¹ Fifth and finally, here as elsewhere, the judgement of the precise flowering of salvation in individual cases demands an exercise of discernment.¹²² This means that Cassian generally resisted stating an abstract doctrine of God's grace and human freedom. But we see that, when he hinted what such a thing might be like, he did so in terms deeply and happily amicable to Augustine's teachings. The inconsistencies noted by Prosper¹²³ may therefore be considered problems that result from Cassian trying to accommodate an Augustinian notion within a non-Augustinian theological matrix. (We might just note that rubs and tensions like this are found even in *soi-disant* orthodox Augustinians. For instance, Prosper's own doctrinal development suggests that he was not fully convinced by Augustine's writings as they stood, either.)¹²⁴

A striking difference, perhaps the most important between the two, was the way they attempted to resolve the difficulty of affirming simultaneously God's ultimate sovereignty and the Pauline admonition to 'work out your salvation with fear and trembling.' Augustine situated the matter within the context of what we might call 'divine epistemology': God's knowledge (which from our time-bound perspective appears to be foreknowledge) of free human actions makes them no less free, no less human, and no less actions. To the contrary, as Augustine insisted, God's knowledge *guarantees* that what He knows as a free human action is precisely that. Otherwise, when God knows a deed to be the free action of a person, God would be mistaken,

¹²⁰ Cassian, *conl* 13.9.1 – God *resistentes ac longe positos uocet, inuitos adtrahat ad salutem, peccare cupientibus explendae copiam subtrahat uoluntis, ad nequitiam properantibus benignus obsistat.*

¹²¹ Cassian, *conl* 11.7.1 (hirelings, not slaves, can hope for a reward), 11.8.3, 11.12.5-6, 21.5.4, 21.7.1-2 (note that John is referring in both cases to converted Christians – 21.5.5), 21.30.1-3; cf. (Macquenn 1977)

¹²² Cassian, *conl* 11.12.1

¹²³ Prosper, *c conl* (PL 45.1801-1833)

¹²⁴ (Cappuyns 1929), (Lorenz 1962)

which is plainly impossible.¹²⁵ Cassian, on the other hand, wrangled with this seeming contradiction on a moral level and, while grounding his exhortations on the bedrock of divine grace, spoke freely of the moral imperative of Christian struggle. If Cassian's analysis elided the hard problems of God's knowledge as it relates to humans that so vexed Augustine, this is not because he was somehow less 'theoretical' and more 'experiential' than Augustine¹²⁶ – though it may well be the case that Augustine formulated a theory that was more comprehensive in scope than was Cassian's. Both of these Fathers theorised their experiences, and experienced their theories. On this account, the *Conferences* bear a good comparison to the *Confessions*: both are gripping stories that are profoundly informed by their authors' theology. It is only regrettable that Cassian did not write as prolifically as Augustine and thus provide us with a key for decoding the *Conferences*.¹²⁷ To reiterate a theme, both Cassian and Augustine were 'monk-theorists' whose theological writings we can understand properly only by taking into account the impact such a life must have on their thinking. It would be interesting to see precisely what impact the monastic character of the Pelagian controversy in its early phases had on Augustine's thinking. (For example, did the fact that he was writing treatises to a monastic audience have an impact upon the way he expressed himself?) But such questions lie beyond the scope of studying Cassian. So we have now come full circle in considering some of the ways their shared monastic culture informed their theological perspectives, and in

¹²⁵ Augustine, *ciu* 5.9-10 (CSEL 40(1).222-230)

¹²⁶ Of course the 'experiential', even 'mystical' element in Cassian's theologising is undeniable; cf. (Miquel 1968) and (Spirelli 1984), p. 29: 'Non la teologia, pertanto, intesa come applicazione delle categorie del pensiero umano alle realtà celesti, potrà mai condurci, secondo Cassiano, alla scoperta della verità; sarà in grado di farlo, invece, unicamente la «teoria», intesa come attività contemplativa scaturita dalla purezza interiore.' But this by no means indicates that Augustine's theology was somehow impoverished with regard to experience or otherwise too bookish, even if he often seems 'philosophical': (Moran 1957) and (Penco 1960).

¹²⁷ Cf. the impressive and convincing attempt by McMahon to interpret the theology of the *Confessions*: (McMahon 1989). Though it is generally true that Cassian did not provide a key for his

describing some of the content of that shared culture. A quick survey of what we have seen is in order.

We have found that both our authors preferred certain tropoi when they described or defended monasticism. Among these, we can include their uses of Luke 10.38-42 and Acts 4.32-5, the metaphors from seafaring and monasticism as the *regia via*. They both heartily argued for the appropriateness of manual labour in monasteries, after each had been tempted in his youth to reject it. Both of them heavily emphasised the eschatological dimension of monastic life. In this, both trod the razor's edge, for they rejected the consummate attainment of perfection in this life, while insisting that efforts to that end must be made. The perfection that they counselled was powerfully described as becoming gods by divine adoption. But both acknowledged with such a remarkable image that, as with mundane cases of adoption, God the parent adopts us the children, and not *vice versa*. In other words, on the matter of divine grace Cassian and Augustine agreed far more than Prosper (and anybody whose perspective derives from his) could imagine. This agreement is, and was, obscured by the different styles each theologian used, and (even more than the simple difference of genre) the different paradigms that governed their understandings of monasticism. However, this should not blind us to the fact that Augustine no less than Cassian was a profound theologian because he was a devoted monk.

work, Fr Víctor Codina's research into the pervasiveness of Cassian's Christology, based on *inc*, should not be neglected: (Codina 1966).

CASSIANUS CONTRA PELAGIANOS

Cassian's opposition to Pelagius and Pelagianism is explicit, even vociferous,¹ and yet modern readers of Cassian have treated this opposition with sustained incredulity and even contempt. Their suspicion is founded on the belief that Cassian's opprobrium for Pelagius and company was an attempt to divert attention from his own theological inadequacy.² This means that scholars suspicious of Cassian tend to rely upon Prosper of Aquitaine's analysis (if only inasmuch as they assume Cassian was involved in 'monastically influenced anti-Augustinianism', in the words of one recent scholar)³, which is inconclusive and objectionable. However, it is not sufficient to cast doubt on Prosper's credentials. Fifteen centuries of habit will not be dislodged so easily. If an interpretation of Cassian's works were to be advanced that, in addition to undermining facile confidence in Prosper's judgment, demonstrated a consistent teaching opposed to

¹ Cassian, *inc* 1.3.3-4.2; 5.2.1-2; 6.14.1-2; 7.21.4; cf. 2.1.1-2

² Stewart speculates that Cassian may have included the case of Leporius 'to certify his anti-Pelagian credentials in Rome' and flatly notes, 'A great work of Christology this is not': (Stewart 1998), pp. 22-23; cf. (Chadwick 1950), pp. 156-160 (but (Chadwick 1968), pp. 137-147, is more reserved and judicious); (Grillmeier 1975), 470-471. A host of other scholars have remarked on Cassian's treatise in connection with the rehabilitation of Nestorius pursued throughout the Twentieth Century, and the reader is referred to Columba Stewart's treatment of Cassian's treatise for further references since these studies do not bear directly on the business at hand.

In the matter of Cassian's anti-Nestorianism, I believe that Lorenzo Dattrino was right in his survey of the contemporary literature to express misgivings about the methodology regularly used to cast doubt on Cassian's integrity, accuracy and perspicuity. While this does not directly bear on Cassian's anti-Pelagianism, it is relevant to the thesis as a whole in that it typifies the modern disdain for Cassian as a theologian. The phenomenon is so widespread, and Dattrino's work so relatively inaccessible, that an extract is justified; (Dattrino 1991), p. 20: 'Condannare Cassiano come interprete arbitrario e soggettivo del pensiero, anche ultimo, di Nestorio, e far questo in base a quanto l'ex-vescovo di Costantinopoli ebbe a dichiarare solo in seguito alla controversia da lui stesso suscitata quando intendeva difendersi da ogni accusa ed equivocare sul linguaggio imprudente da lui usato, non risponde a criteri obiettivi.' See also (Fairbairn forthcoming), esp. chapters 5 and 6. This monograph is based on Dr. Fairbairn's thesis and I thank him for allowing me to consult before its eagerly-anticipated publication.

³ (Stewart 1998), p. 25. It is worth drawing out the point: to this day, Cassian's theological competence is maligned because Prosper believed him to be an anti-Augustinian. In this chapter, we will not have occasion to dwell on Cassian's differences with Augustine. They certainly exist. But, in keeping with my conviction that these differences have received far too much attention, in this chapter we will instead focus on Cassian's differences with Pelagius. This regrettably means the work of assessing Cassian's

Pelagian principles from Cassian's early career; and showed the congruity of this teaching with uncontested aspects of Cassian's theology – then we would have a compelling case for taking Cassian seriously when he objects to Pelagius. To be specific, Cassian's position on human autonomy, which emerges from his earliest works and so in the early phases of the controversy,⁴ is fundamentally at odds with Pelagius'. As we shall see, Pelagius grounded his moral theology on the conviction that human will is inviolable, while Cassian, to the contrary, affirmed that God can convert the unwilling. Moreover, Cassian's teaching on grace is closely linked to his Christology – so much so, that one can reasonably talk of Cassian's Christology of grace.⁵ It is therefore appropriate in examining Cassian's denunciation of Pelagius to attend to the implications of the term *homo assumptus*, as regularly used by Cassian.

- On the coherence of Pelagianism

A preliminary word should be said on Pelagianism. Numerous monographs, essays and studies have recently been written about Pelagius and his fellows.⁶ These studies have decisively undercut the presumption that Pelagianism was a uniform movement characterised chiefly by its theological and social optimism, liberty and

disagreement with Augustine will be left undone. But the work here undertaken is a necessary preliminary to any accurate assessment of that problem.

⁴ See p. 48 fn. 179, above.

⁵ See pp. 47-51, above.

⁶ For what follows, I am chiefly indebted to G. Bonner: (Bonner 1966), (Bonner 1970), (Bonner 1972); P. Brown: (Brown 1972a), (Brown 1972c), (Brown 1972b); (De Bruyn 1993); G. de Plinval: (de Plinval 1943), (de Plinval 1947); R.F. Evans: (Evans 1968b), (Evans 1968a); (Greshake 1972); (Rees 1998); (Thier 1999); and (Valero 1980). I have not had access to (Dempsey 1937); (Pirenne 1961); or (Prete 1961b).

humanism.⁷ Gerald Bonner has wisely cautioned that ‘one should avoid any facile use of the style “Pelagians” as a blanket-term to cover a number of highly individual personalities.’⁸ The operative term in Prof. Bonner’s caveat is ‘facile’. As he has argued in another paper, although the term ‘Pelagian’ should be used with care, it is not therefore devoid of meaning: Pelagius himself can still be considered a Pelagian.⁹ But since the movement associated with his name admits of a considerable variety of theological nuance, we need to come to terms with the central tenets of Pelagianism before any assessment of Cassian’s response to Pelagian ideas is possible. Let us consider a few of the propositions that recur in the writings of the Pelagians.

We begin with the case of infant baptism. Pelagius’ understanding of baptism shows a remarkably well-developed teaching about the regeneration that it implies.¹⁰ However he takes little interest in the baptism of infants – as when his analysis of the grace of baptism is predicated on the assumption of choice and consent;¹¹ and in his early writings he is content to state insouciantly that infants who die unbaptised will not therefore be deprived of the Kingdom of Heaven.¹² In what may be regarded as evidence that he has already begun to be embroiled in controversy stirred by the more radical

⁷ Pelagius himself endorsed the dim estimation of the unaided capabilities of human wisdom found in Isaiah: *leg diu* 3 (PL 30.108).

⁸ (Bonner 1972), p. 3

⁹ (Bonner 1966). In this context, one can only stand in awe of the superior semantic precision deployed in the distinction Greshake makes, (Greshake 1972), p. 27 fn. 3: ‘Wir verwenden das Wort “pelagisch” im Unterschied zu “pelagianisch” dann, wenn es im strikten Sinn Person und Werk des Pelagius selbst und nicht der Pelagianer meint.’

¹⁰ Pelagius, *leg diu* 1-2 (PL 30.106). On this, see (Bohlin 1957); (Rivière 1946).

¹¹ Pelagius, *leg diu* 1 (PL 30.106): ‘Qua ratione colligimus uocationem nostram iuxta uocantis dignationem, etiam nostrae uoluntatis stare consensus....’; similarly, at *exp* 2 Cor 8.17, (Souter 1926), pp. 277.18-278.2, Pelagius notes, ‘Gratiam quidem exhortationis accepit, sed uoluntate propria festinauit, ut mercedem haberet, non inuictus, quasi ei sit credita dispensatio.’

¹² That lack of interest notwithstanding, Pelagius thought that unbaptised infant will not be therefore deprived of the Kingdom of Heaven, which is distinguished from eternal life; cf. Pelagius, *exp* Rom 5.14 ((Souter 1926), 46.26-47.13); Augustine, *nat et gr* 9.10 (CSEL 60.238-239). See (De Bruyn 1993), pp. 18-24.

views of his associates, Pelagius later stipulates that he maintains ‘one baptism, which sacrament we aver must be celebrated with the same formula for infants as for adults’;¹³ and he deplores those who would deny ‘the common redemption of the human race’, baptism, to babies on the basis of their age.¹⁴ Meanwhile, Aurelius of Carthage and Paulinus of Milan pressed Caelestius to justify his affirmation that babies are baptised *in remissionem peccatorum* (the same formula used for adults’ baptisms) – a difficult question for Caelestius precisely because of his insistence that babies are in fact sinless.¹⁵ Gerald Bonner has convincingly argued that the influence of Rufinus of Syria is decisive in Caelestius’ consolidation of disparate beliefs similar (but not identical) to Pelagius’.¹⁶ They share a common rationale for baptising sinless babies that is altogether lacking in Pelagius’ works.¹⁷ Pelagius may therefore have been genuinely baffled when the fourteen bishops at Diospolis interrogated him on this point.¹⁸ In this context (though, as we will see, not in others), it would be a serious mistake to say with Professor Brown that ‘the Pelagian is contemptuous of babies.’¹⁹ Babies are more likely something of a puzzlement to the Pelagian.

¹³ Pelagius, *lib fid* 7 (PL 15.1718): ‘Baptisma unum tenemus, quod iisdem sacramenti uerbis in infantibus, quibus etiam in maioribus, asserimus esse celebrandum.’

¹⁴ Pelagius, ap. Augustine, *gr et pecc or* 2.19.21 (CSEL 42.181.13-15): ‘Quis ille tam impius est qui cuiuslibet aetatis paruulo interdicat communem humani generis redemptionem?’; cf. Ambrose of Chalcedon, *exp fid Cath* (PLS 1.1684), Sicilian Anonymous, *diu* 8.3, (Caspari 1964), pp. 35.35-36.8. Evans rightly criticises Pelagius for being inconsistent on this front: (Evans 1968b), pp. 118-119.

¹⁵ Caelestius, ap. Augustine, *gr et pecc or* 2.5.5 (CSEL 42.169.26-170.3); Augustine supplies a transcript of Caelestius’ interrogation, along with his own interpretation of these events, at *gr et pecc or* 2.4.3-7.8. This preoccupation with infant baptism seems to have caught on in Sicily; Hilary notes that it is being discussed in Syracuse, ap. Augustine, *ep* 156 (CSEL 44.448.12-15): ‘... quod quidam Christiani apud Syracusas exponunt dicentes [...] infantem non baptizatum morte praeuentum non posse perire merito, quoniam sine peccato nascitur.’

¹⁶ (Bonner 1970)

¹⁷ Rufinus, *fid* 40-41, 48: (Miller 1964), 114.9-118.14, 126.4-8; for Caelestius, see n. 12 above.

¹⁸ Cf. Augustine, *gest Pel* 19.43 (CSEL 42.98-99), for Pelagius’ disavowal of the charges taken from Caelestius, including the thesis, *infantes etsi non baptizentur, habere uitam aeternam* (ibid. 11.23).

However, Dr Evans has cast doubt on the truthfulness of Pelagius’ testimony: (Evans 1964).

¹⁹ (Brown 2000), p. 352

Meanwhile, the Sicilian Anonymous²⁰ selectively extends Pelagius' ideals on several fronts to such an extent that he becomes far more Pelagian than Pelagius. For instance, the Sicilian pushes the distinction between the Old and New Testaments further than Pelagius ever did;²¹ he is in fact little short of scornful in one passage.²² While Pelagius typically presents the saints of the Old Testament as exemplars,²³ the Sicilian's parallel invocation of them is vitiated by a condescending attitude toward pre-Christian history in general ('These things were from the Old Testament, when the dignity of modesty shone with correspondingly less glorious splendour due to the quality of the times, which ordered marriage for the lustful')²⁴ and his lengthiest catena focuses on their sins, not their virtues.²⁵

He also takes an uncompromising line on sin that would have made Pelagius blanch. Pelagius acknowledged the value of penitence for the lapsed and thereby acknowledged the possibility that a Christian could fall into sin;²⁶ likewise, Rufinus the

²⁰ Credit for this refinement of Dr. Morris's 'Sicilian Briton' goes to Gerald Bonner, who rightly questions Morris's inference. See (Morris 1965), p. 40; and (Bonner 1972), pp. 5-6. Morris did not accept Caspari's identification of the author as a certain Briton called Agricola, whom Prosper denounced (see (Caspari 1964), pp. 382-388), though he did endorse Caspari's interpretation of the 'periculosa expeditio' as the author's travels from Britain to Sicily.

²¹ Pelagius makes a point of affirming the entire canon 'which the authority of the Holy Catholic Church hands down', *lib fid* 8 (PL 45.1718), and repeatedly castigates the Manichaeans for separating the two testaments, *exp* 2 Cor 3.7, 12.1, 1 Tim 6.3, (Souter 1926), pp. 246.19-247.10, 302.13, 499.16-18.

²² E.g., Sicilian Anonymous, *cast* 12.4, (Caspari 1964), p. 151.11-30; and *diu* 9.4-5, (Caspari 1964), pp. 38.13-39.12. The Sicilian does not refrain from effectively denouncing the Old Testament when his opponents point to inconvenient things it upholds. In the passages just cited, Old Testament accolades for wealth and procreation come under fire.

²³ Pelagius, *Dem* 5-6 (PL 33.1102-1104)

²⁴ Sicilian Anonymous, *cast* 6.1, (Caspari 1964), p. 132.24-26

²⁵ Sicilian Anonymous, *mal doct* 13, (Caspari 1964), pp. 90.7-91.24. Pelagius was not blind to the faults of Jewish sinners (see *Dem* 7 (PL 33.1104)), but he devotes less energy to denouncing them than he does to praising Jewish saints (see n. 19).

²⁶ Pelagius, *lib fid* 7 (PL 45.1718): '...Hominem, si post baptismum lapsus fuerit, per poenitentiam credimus posse saluari.' And *exp* Eph 5.27, (Souter 1926), 378.4-6: Si omnibus membris immacula est [sc., ecclesia], maculati ab ea alieni esse censentur, nisi rursus per poenitentiam fuerint expurgati.' Cf. *Dem*. 8 (PL 33.1104-1105), where Pelagius intimates the need for correction of life even among sincere Christians, particularly when a wayward youth has resulted in malformed habits. When Pelagius warns that there is Hell to pay for sins, even little sins, and that these sins are unforgivable (*uirg* 7, (Halm 1866), pp. 232.8-

Syrian,²⁷ and at least one other anonymous Pelagian author, who appealed to lapsed Christians to repent or encouraged penitent Christians to persevere.²⁸ But the Sicilian set the bar higher. 'A Christian,' he says,

is one who never lies; never curses; who makes an oath under no circumstances; who does not repay evil for evil, but rather good; who blesses those who curse him and even does good for them; who loves his enemies; who prays for those who persecute him and calumniate against him; whose every thought is also pure from every wickedness and shamefulness; who asks of no one what he himself would not wish to come to pass, but freely imparts to all what he would wish to have himself; and, that I might conclude briefly, who after the washing of baptism is a stranger to sin. For I say nothing about greater misdeeds, since there is no doubt that lesser offences are not allowed to one for whom committing greater offences is not permitted.²⁹

Lest there be any misunderstanding, the Sicilian adds this rider: 'Unless someone were just, he could not be saved; but he will not be just, unless he stops sinning.'³⁰ At no point in the extant writings of the Sicilian does repentance enter into his message. In its place, we find only improvement. Indeed, the Sicilian's confession of his own sinfulness is not tantamount to an admission that he constantly lapses; rather, it means that he still has a great deal more progress to make. His flattering references to being outstripped by his addressee *in omni religionis cultu et deuotione* makes this quite clear.³¹ All this could be an accident of history: perhaps letters and homilies in which he encouraged repentance

234.7), the warning is directed to those who would *excuse* their sins by flattering themselves for what they have done (pp. 232.23-233.3). That sort of attitude, which is antithetical to repentance, is the only thing in this passage precludes forgiveness.

²⁷ Rufinus, *fid* 50, (Miller 1964), 128.6-8: 'Quamdiu igitur sumus in hac uita, possumus poenitentiam agere et futuram illam beatam uitam ac sempiternam mereri.'

²⁸ Anon., *Pam et Oc* 4 (PL 30.239-242) clearly indicates that the unknown author is calling to repentance his addressees, though they are already Christian; likewise, *uera paen* (PL 30.242-245) and *uirg deu* (PL 17.579-584). Although I agree with Caspari, (Caspari 1964), p. 397, and Rees that *mag cumulatur*, (Caspari 1964), pp. 171-178, is Pelagian in provenance, I find no reason to assume with Rees that the recipient of it has become a Pelagian ascetic: (Rees 1998), p. 326. It is more economic to understand the recipient as simply a penitent. The idea of a Pelagian doing penance is, as we have seen, not at all implausible.

²⁹ Sicilian Anonymous, '*Hon tuae*' 1, (Caspari 1964), p. 5.15-25

³⁰ Sicilian Anonymous, '*Hon tuae*' 1, (Caspari 1964), p. 7.25-8.2; cf. *cast* 10.8, (Caspari 1964), p. 144.7-10.

³¹ Sicilian Anonymous, *mal doct* 1.3, (Caspari 1964), p. 68.18-27

have for whatever reason not survived. And yet the Sicilian's reader is left with the distinct impression that only progress is possible for 'authentic Christians'³² and backsliding is strictly impossible. So the Sicilian takes Pelagius' line about the importance of not sinning and impressively extends it.³³

Even more striking is the Sicilian's extension of Pelagian reforms from the private life into social life.³⁴ He takes up the broad mandate for Christian charity we find in Pelagius,³⁵ but further issues a call for the rich to renounce all their possessions in language that could be taken as a justification for despoiling the rich: 'Get rid of the rich and you will find no poor. Let no one have more than is necessary, and everyone will have as much as is necessary. For the few who are rich, are the cause of the many who are poor.'³⁶ Not least because of the Sicilian's *On riches*³⁷ have scholars debated the merits of considering Pelagianism a social movement.³⁸ On the other hand, R. F. Evans

³² Cf. Sicilian Anonymous, *diu* 10.3, (Caspari 1964), p. 41.5-11

³³ Cf. Pelagius, *uirg* 6, (Halm 1866), p. 230.24-25: 'Iustitia ergo non aliud est quam non peccare, non peccare autem est legis praecepta seruare.' See also *exp* Gal 3.10, (Souter 1926), p. 319.5-18.

³⁴ Cf. (Morris 1965), pp. 45-51

³⁵ Note how the Sicilian glosses his exhortation to holiness: 'Esto sanctus, innocens, misericors, pudicus, hospitalis et pius. Nulli aduenienti tua clausa sit domus, nullus, si possibile est, mensam nesciat tuam; esurientes et egentes tuis panis saturentur. Adiuua uiduas, pupillos defende, indefensos tuere, succurre miseris laborantibus, omnibus necessitatem patientibus opem praesta, ut tu dicere cum sancto uiro possis: "Conseruau i egenum de manu potentis et pupillo, cui non erat adiutor, auxiliatus sum. Os uiduae benedixit me. Cum essem oculus caecorum, pes quoque eram claudorum et inualidorum pater (Job 29.12-13, 15-16).' Sicilian Anonymous, '*Hon tuae*' 6, (Caspari 1964), p. 13.4-13. This is paralleled by Pelagius' explanation of what it means to 'love one's neighbour as oneself' at, e.g., *uit chr* 6, 10, 14.1-2 (PL 50.389, 393-395, 400).

³⁶ See Sicilian Anonymous, *diu* 12.2, (Caspari 1964), p. 48.15-18. I am unaware of any evidence that the Sicilian was actually fomenting revolution and think the passage just cited can easily be read as a thought-experiment.

³⁷ Esp. Sicilian Anonymous, *diu* 8.1-3, (Caspari 1964), pp. 34.21-35.36

³⁸ Supporting the claim: (Myers 1960), (Morris 1965), (Frere 1967), (Morris 1968), (Ward 1972), pp. 284-285, (Greshake 1972), pp. 35-37, (Salway 1981), pp. 443, 727; rejecting it: (Liebeschutz 1963), (Liebeschutz 1966), (Cameron 1968), (Thompson 1977), 314 and n. 42, (Thomas 1981), pp. 53-60. The claim simply does not withstand the criticisms leveled against it. In any case, any straightforward reading of the Sicilian as an *ur-Sozialist* is confounded by his willingness to countenance wealth 'which is acquired without any sin, is spent on good deeds and by which no opportunity or need for delinquency is provided to its possessors' (*diu* 6.1; cf. 19.3-4, (Caspari 1964), pp. 30.17-19, 61.26-64.4). It would be possible, perhaps, to extend Jones's doubts about the Egyptian character of Monophysitism, the African character of Donatism and the German character of Arianism to the British character of Pelagianism; see (Jones 1959).

has judged that such social considerations had relatively little impact on Pelagius.³⁹ Certainly, Pelagius reckoned that the waters of baptism made all Christians equals, irrespective of their wealth or social standing; but, as with the Pauline attitude toward masters and their bondservants,⁴⁰ there is no indication that by this teaching Pelagius sought to rework the order of society.⁴¹ On this score, the Sicilian embraces the equality of Christians – an element present in Pelagius also – but he pursues this insight in a way that neither Pelagius nor any other of the authors whose works survive did.

The Sicilian's attitude toward the relative values of marriage and chastity also distinguishes him from Pelagius. The Sicilian basically understands marriage as a stopgap measure that is permitted for dealing with 'the exigencies necessitated by incontinence'.⁴² So, when he flatly calls sex in marriage a 'bad thing',⁴³ or, at best, a 'doubtful good',⁴⁴ we are left to wonder why the Church blesses marriages at all.⁴⁵ Likewise, he says that chastity, by which he means a property 'that is held to be foreign from all intercourse and desire', is the 'basis of holiness and righteousness'.⁴⁶ He allows

³⁹ (Evans 1968b), pp. 90-121

⁴⁰ E.g., Eph. 6.5-9; Col.3.22- 4.1; 1 Tim. 6.1-2; Tit. 2.9-10; Phil. 8-18

⁴¹ Pelagius, *uirg* 16, (Halm 1866), pp. 246.14-247.8; cf. *exp* 1 Cor 7.20-21, (Souter 1926), p. 165.11-13: 'Ne dicas: "quo modo possum deo placere, qui seruus sum?" deus enim non condiciones aspicit, sed uoluntatem quaerit et mentem.'

⁴² Sicilian Anonymous, *cast* 10.4, (Caspari 1964), p. 140.8-9; cf. *ibid.* 16, (Caspari 1964), p. 159.20-21: 'nuptiarum eis remedia concessa ab eodem apostolo'. It would be misleading to see this as straightforward application of St Paul's teaching: the Sicilian dramatically reworks 1 Cor. 7 so as to eliminate Paul's tolerance of marriage as a gift from God, and to invest Paul's self-confessedly personal admonition with the full weight of divine prophecy. The resultant doctrine is far more radical than the epistle itself.

⁴³ Sicilian Anonymous, *cast* 10.2, (Caspari 1964), p. 138.28-30: 'Deinde hinc, cum dicis, bonum esse homini mulierem non tangere, uideris ostendere malum esse si tangat. Nihil enim bono contrarium est, nisi malum.'

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 10.6, (Caspari 1964), p. 142.28-30: "'Melius est enim nubere quam uri [1 Cor 7.9]. Inde nubere melius est, quia malum est uri. Suspiciosum bonum est, quod graui poena melius aestimatur.'

⁴⁵ Note that the Sicilian presumes that the Corinthians asked Paul about marriage because as Christians they did not know how to limit it appropriately. The Pelagian offers arguments from nature and custom for marriage, but no specifically Christian arguments and nowhere does he indicate that marriage is an estate blessed by God. See Sicilian Anonymous, *cast* 9.1-2, (Caspari 1964), pp. 136.21-137.27.

⁴⁶ Sicilian Anonymous, *cast* 2, (Caspari 1964), p. 123.6, 20-21

that married people may attain to ‘life’, but not ‘the kingdom’.⁴⁷ We detect a measure of satisfaction at his better lot lurking behind the self-recrimination when he writes, ‘We are unmarried and we get on safe and sound from the bonds of such an annoying burden, and nevertheless we scarcely are able to keep the commandments in their entirety.’⁴⁸ He refuses to condemn marriage outright – but only, it would appear, out of deference to the blessed Apostle.⁴⁹

As for Pelagius, he puts Ex 19.15 to even more pointed use than the Sicilian when he argues from it that communion is appropriate for the continent.⁵⁰ And yet, in a letter in which he reproves a married woman for unilaterally opting for celibacy, Pelagius firmly states ‘the rule of apostolic teaching does not with Jovianian equate the works of wives with continence; nor does it with Mani damn married women.’⁵¹ Pelagius affirms the hierarchical value of virginity, widowhood and marriage, in that order;⁵² but insists

⁴⁷ Sicilian Anonymous, *cast* 8.2, (Caspari 1964), p. 136.13-15; cf. *mal doct* 8.1, (Caspari 1964), p. 78.10-32, *diu* 18.5, (Caspari 1964), p. 57.10-22 (a passage which shows that the Sicilian understands life and the kingdom to be closely allied, and that he jealously reserves that distinction for his own usage!). Pelagius indicates that the reward of life is preliminary to the reward of the kingdom: *uirg* 4, (Halm 1866), pp. 228-229. According to Augustine, the Pelagians (probably Rufinus and Caelestius, with their characteristic interest in infant baptism, and certainly Julian) also applied this distinction to unbaptised infants: *pecc mer* 1.20.26 (CSEL 60.25-26); *C Iul imp* 3.199.1-2, (Zelzer 1974), pp. 498.8-499.29.

⁴⁸ Sicilian Anonymous, *cast* 10.8, (Caspari 1964), p. 144.21-23

⁴⁹ Sicilian Anonymous, *cast* 16, (Caspari 1964), p. 159.6-8, citing (and slyly reinterpreting) 1 Tm 4.1-5; cf. *ibid.* 4.2, p. 127.13-15.

⁵⁰ Pelagius, *exp* 1 Thess 4.2-3, (Souter 1926), p. 429.6-11; Sicilian Anonymous, *cast* 5.2, (Caspari 1964), pp. 131.23-132.2

⁵¹ Pelagius, *Cel* 28, (de Hartel 1999), p. 456.11-13: ‘apostolicae doctrinae regula nec cum Ioviniano aequat continentiae opera nuptiarum nec cum Manicheo coniugia condemnat.’ See also *exp* 1 Tim 4.2, (Souter 1926), p. 489.14-17: ‘...omnis enim qui nuptias damnat, non amator, sed inimicus est castitatis, dum et continentibus laudem tollit, et incontinentes, sublato nuptiarum remedio, fornicationis facit inire discrimen.’; *Dem* 9, 10 (PL 33.1105-1106): ‘Conceduntur quidem nuptiae, cranium usus et uini; sed horum omnium abstinentia consilio perfecto suadetur’; ‘uirgo, uidua, nupta, summus, medius, et imus gradus, aequaliter iubentur implere praecepta’; and *uirg* 8, (Halm 1866), p. 234.19-20: ‘ergo, ut diximus, quae conubia deserunt, non illicita, sed licita spernunt.’ On the difference between the two, see (Prete 1961a), (Evans 1968b), pp. 37-41. Pelagius also condemned Jovinian at *lib fid* 12, 13 (PL 45.1718). The Sicilian’s denunciation of Jovinian (*cast* 10.7, (Caspari 1964), p. 143.12-13), in keeping with the tendency of his own thought to belittle marriage as much as possible, is especially truculent.

⁵² Pelagius, *exp* 1 Cor 7.40, (Souter 1926), p. 170.19-22: ‘Beata habens maritum, si custodiat iustitiam: beatior uidua, quia minore labore maius inueniet castitatis praemium: beatissima uirgo, quae sine labore ad summum praemium poterit praeuenire.’

that they are all obliged to fulfil the same commandments.⁵³ He also indicates that the blessings they receive are the same, though virgins are especially blessed.⁵⁴ So, even though Pelagius has no qualms with preferring consecrated virginity to marriage, he is not on that account led to castigate marriage and so he is not bedevilled by the need to affirm simultaneously the acceptability and the contemptibleness of marriage.⁵⁵ Both theologians are distinguished from Julian.⁵⁶ Contrasting his view to an excerpt from Augustine's *On marriage and concupiscence*,⁵⁷ Julian nonchalantly says of libido, 'we defend it as natural and as belonging to God's work, not like some great good, but like the body's senses, which God made.'⁵⁸ We may suppose that Julian's experience as a married man gave him a different vantage point from which to see these things, so that he

⁵³ Pelagius, *Dem* 10: 'Dixi, idemque nunc repeto, in causa iustitiae omnes unum debemus: uirgo, uidua, nupta, summus, medius, et imus gradus, aequaliter iubentur implere praecepta.' I understand the second sequence ('summus, medius, et imus gradus') to be a gloss on the first ('uirgo, uidua, nupta').

⁵⁴ See *uirg* 1, (Halm 1866), p. 225.16-18. Elsewhere, Pelagius affirms that there are different degrees of merit, which will accordingly receive different degrees of reward: *leg diu* 7 (PL 30.113A-B); *exp* 1 Cor 15.41((Souter 1926), 223.5-8). Cf. Ambrose of Chalcedon, *exp fid Cath* (PLS 1.1684): 'una merita sanctorum omnium. sed diversa merita praemiorum.'

⁵⁵ The contrast with the Sicilian is patent when their respective glosses on 1 Cor. 7 are compared: see Pelagius, *exp* 1 Cor 1-40, (Souter 1926), pp. 159.2-171.2; and Sicilian Anonymous, *cast* 10, (Caspari 1964), pp. 137.28-149.17.

⁵⁶ Thus, (Evans 1968b) p. 40: 'Pelagius stands somewhere in the middle between these two, and it is not surprising that an early redactor of the text of Pelagius' commentary shows as one of his tendencies to review in a sense injurious to marriage and sexuality.' Pelagius makes the following points: continence is preferable to an active sex life: *exp* 1 Cor 7.1-3, (Souter 1926), p. 159.7-17; consecrated virginity is superior to married life, and has a greater heavenly reward: *Dem* 9 (PL 33, 1105-1106); *uirg* 1-2, (Halm 1866), pp. 225-227.3; and spouses who have contracted a *blanc marriage* are *perfecti*: *exp* 1 Cor 7.29, Eph. 5.22, 5.29, 1 Thes 4.4, (Souter 1926), pp. 167.15-17; 376.18-377.4; 378.12-13; 429.12-15; nevertheless, sex in the married life is not to be disparaged: *Cel* 28-30, (de Hartel 1999), pp. 455.19-458.11; note too that *exp* 1 Cor 7.2-3, 4-5, (Souter 1926), pp. 159.17-160.20, 160.22-161.18 are interpolations of the sort that Evans described, on which see also (De Bruyn 1993), pp. 30-35; and indeed sexual desire is a legitimate motive for marriage: again, *exp* 1 Cor 7.1-3, (Souter 1926), p. 159.7-17.

⁵⁷ Augustine notes that Julian inaccurately quotes his works with the effect of distorting Augustine's argument: see *c Iul imp* 3.142, (Zelzer 1974), p. 448 and *nupt et conc* 2.21.36 (BA 23.226). Of course, Julian accused Augustine of doing the same: *c Iul imp* 1.16-17, (Zelzer 1974), pp. 13-15. Augustine himself provides the likeliest solution to these accusations – other people forwarded expurgated versions of each man's work to friends of the other: *c Iul imp* pref. 2, 1.19, (Zelzer 1974), pp. 3-4, 16-17.

⁵⁸ Julian *ap.* Augustine *c Iul imp* 3.142.2, (Zelzer 1974), pp. 447-448

can expatiate at some length on the ‘force of pleasure and desire’.⁵⁹ This experience sets Julian apart from Pelagius and the Sicilian,⁶⁰ and his thoughts on marriage and sexuality have a consequent profundity lacked by the others’ writings. Curiously, Paulinus’ epithalamium for Julian is more akin to the Sicilian’s hortatory cautions against marriage than it is to Julian’s reflections on marriage!⁶¹

- The rigours of Pelagian morality

These variations notwithstanding, the Pelagian preachers and theologians were united by more than simply the external pressure brought to bear on them by African, Milanese, Spanish, Gallic and Roman expatriates. What made Pelagianism a coherent movement was first and foremost its message of reform leading to Christian perfection. This message was borne up by several tacit presuppositions with respect to which we find broad-based agreement. For instance, Pelagianism consistently insists upon the need for ascetic struggle in order to measure up to rigorous standards befitting Christians: ‘No Christian is permitted to sin, and living a spotless life befits absolutely all who have been cleansed by the sanctification of the spiritual washing, that they might be admitted into the innermost parts (*uisceribus*) of the Church, which is described as being “without spot

⁵⁹ Julian *ap. Augustine, c Iul imp* 5.11 (PL 45.1440; NB: Dr. Zelzer’s edition of this part of the work is not yet available.)

⁶⁰ Note that this does not distinguish Julian from Augustine. Though decades had passed, Augustine would have had memories of the common-law marriage of his youth, which taught him many things, *conf* 4.2.2, (O'Donnell 1992), 1.33: ‘in illis annis unam habebam non eo quod legitimum uocatur coniugio cognitam, sed quam indagauerat uagus ardour inops prudentiae, sed unam tamen, ei quoque seruans tori fidem, in qua sane experirer exemplo meo quid distaret inter coniugalis placiti modum, quod foederatum esset generandi gratia, et pactum libidinosi amoris, ubi proles etiam contra uotum nascitur, quamuis iam nata cogat se diligere.’

⁶¹ Paulinus, *car* 25 (PL 61.633B-638C)

or wrinkle or any such thing” (Eph. 5.27)...’⁶² This reform is itself of greater importance than the precise details of their preaching as such. So, for instance, their divergent perspectives on which of the finer points about baptism are worth debating are ultimately of less importance than their agreement that maximal Christian practice is the only acceptable behaviour after baptism.⁶³ The Sicilian sums up the matter with characteristic verve: ‘It is not the name, but the deed that makes a Christian. [...] So they err greatly who think themselves Christians in that they have the name Christian, not knowing that it isn’t the thing that is owed to the name, but the name to the thing; and that a person may rightly be called what he is, but it is vain if he is called what he is not.’⁶⁴ All the Pelagians agreed on the possibility of sinlessness; the critical need for struggle to attain it; and the importance of the Christian community in that struggle. It is in effect a matter of definition that all Pelagian works share this stock of common beliefs, consistently deployed in the same ways to the same ends, which set them apart from contemporary writings. In this connection, Morris’s description of ‘a common Pelagian idiom’ is helpful.⁶⁵

⁶² Pelagius, *uirg* 11, (Halm 1866), p. 241.8-12; cf. Augustine, *gest Pel* 6.16 (CSEL 42.68-69).

⁶³ E.g., Pelagius, *leg diu* 9 (PL 30.114-115). That baptism is a decisive turning-point is seen in the Sicilian’s treatment of catechumens as a distinct grade within the church, for whom lesser standards are acceptable: Sicilian Anonymous, *diu* 12.4-6, (Caspari 1964), pp. 48.25-49.21.

⁶⁴ Sicilian Anonymous, ‘*Hum reflit*’ 3, (Caspari 1964), 17.17, 19-22: ‘Christianum enim non nomen, sed actus facit. [...] Errant enim nimium, qui in hoc se Christianos putant, quod Christianum tantum possideant nomen, ignorantes, quod non res nomini, sed nomen rei debeatur, et recte aliquem uocari, quod sit, quod non sit uero uanum esse si uocetur’; cf. Sicilian Anonymous, ‘*Hon tuae*’ 1, (Caspari 1964), p. 5.9-11: ‘Uehementer enim errat, quisque putat, se rem aliquam iam obtinuisse, si eius obtineat nomen, cum nomen rei non res nomini debeatur.’ Pelagius, *uirg* 17, (Halm 1866), p. 248.14-17: ‘sancta magis esse quam uideri stude, quia nihil prodest aestimari quod non sis, et duplicis peccati reus est non habere quod creditur et quod non habeas simulare.’ Pelagius offers a similar admonition to Demetrias, *Dem* 20 (PL 33.1113): ‘Auferantur omnia figmenta uerborum, cessent simulati gestus, et ante occasionem sermo placidus’. This comes in the context of Pelagius’ reproach for feigned piety. See also Pelagius, *uit chr* 1, 6, 10-11, 13 (PL 50.383-385, 389, 393-396, 397-400).

⁶⁵ (Morris 1965), p. 32

It is not our purpose to offer here a comprehensive account of Pelagian theology, or even Pelagius' own theology.⁶⁶ Instead, we will identify one particular principle of Pelagian theology that can be profitably compared to Cassian's theology – namely, the inviolability of human will. This principle is a fundamental postulate of Pelagian morality.⁶⁷ Pelagius begins his teaching with a clear and important ontological claim: 'Whatever is constrained by natural necessity is deprived of choice and deliberation of the will.'⁶⁸ This has immediate and obvious ethical consequences: 'So then, how can one be held responsible by God for a sin which he does not recognise as his own? For it is not his, if it is necessary; but if it is his, it is voluntary. And if it is voluntary, it can be avoided.'⁶⁹ Thus Pelagius. The Sicilian Anonymous is not to be outdone: 'If a man is not able to be sinless, what transpires on account of that inability will no longer be sin, since the inability is ascribed to nature; however, sin is not ascribed to nature, but to will,

⁶⁶ Evans's excellent work has rendered such an undertaking largely redundant; see esp. (Evans 1968b), pp. 90-121.

⁶⁷ Cf. Pelagius, *Dem* 2-4 (PL 33.1100-1102).

⁶⁸ Pelagius, *nat* ap. Augustine, *nat et gr* 46.54 (CSEL 60.272.25-26): 'Uoluntatis enim arbitrio ac deliberatione priuatur, quidquid naturali necessitate constringitur.' Cf. *Dem.* 7 (PL 33.1104): 'Scripturarum utar testimoniis, quæ peccantes ubique crimine uoluntatis grauant, non excusant *necessitate naturae*.' Pelagius only ever talks of a 'necessity of sinning' by way of stressing the power of habit, and even then he hedges the term 'necessitas': *lib arb*, ap. Augustine, *gr et pecc or* 1.39.43 (CSEL 42.156.25-157.6); cf. *exp Rom* 7.20, (Souter 1926), p. 59.13; *lib arb* fr. 1 (PLS 1.1540).

⁶⁹ Pelagius, *nat* ap. Augustine, *nat et gr* 30.34 (CSEL 60.258.1-4): 'deinde quomodo deo pro illius peccati reatu subditus esse poterit, quo suum non esse cognouerit? Suum enim non est, si necessarium est. Aut si suum est, uoluntarium est. Et si uoluntarium est, uitari potest.' Pelagius also taught that the Christian era is the 'time of grace, in which the fullness of perfection has arrived' (*leg diu* 10.2, PL 30.116). At Diospolis, Pelagius was presented with a dossier of excerpts pointing to a doctrine of sinlessness, to which he responded, Augustine, *gest Pel* 6.16 (CSEL 42.68.25-69.7): 'We have said that a man can be without sin and keep God's commandments, if he wishes; for God gave him this possibility. However, we did not say that anyone can be found who, from his infancy even to his old age, has never sinned; rather, [we said that] having turned from sins by his own effort and God's grace, he can be without sin – but not therefore incorruptible from that point on. As for the rest of the statements which were put down below, they are neither in our books, nor did we ever say such things.' Although we know that in fact at least one of the excerpts did come from Pelagius (the third is a quotation from *uit chr* 11), Pelagius' summary of his teaching is consistent with what we find in his writings. Pelagius' own teaching therefore warrants the explicit proclamation by later Pelagians of a doctrine of sinlessness (on which, see fn. 25-32).

lest the one who commits the deed be judged guilty by nature.’⁷⁰ In terms of the spiritual life, these principles safeguard the attribution of praise or blame based on performance of and obedience to God’s law.⁷¹ Accordingly Pelagius states, ‘That eternal life cannot be rewarded except for the keeping of all the divine precepts, Scripture attests when it says, “If you would come into life, keep the commandments” (Mt. 19.17),’⁷² Because the enacted will is sufficient to this task, without defecting in the slightest from his doctrine of maximal Christianity, Pelagius can further say, ‘And neither has anything impossible been commanded you: he who has done what he could, has fulfilled everything.’⁷³

If, *per impossibile*, God or the demons or whoever could override a person’s will, then that person’s responsibility would be fundamentally compromised.⁷⁴ This poses the problem that, if God can override a sinful will,⁷⁵ the justice of divine judgment can be called into question.⁷⁶ Caelestius likely has this conundrum in mind when he argues that it would be unjust for God to give grace to sinners.⁷⁷ The same principle is at stake in

⁷⁰ Sicilian Anonymous, ‘*Hon tuae*’ 1, (Caspari 1964), 6.5-8; cf. *poss non pecc.* 2.2-3.2, (Caspari 1964), 115.22-117.32. Cf. Caelestius ap. Augustine, *perfiust* 2.1 (CSEL 42.4.11-17): ‘Ante omnia interrogandus est qui negat hominem sine peccato esse posse, qui sit quodcumque peccatum: quod uitari potest an quod uitari non potest. Si quod uitari non potest, peccatum non est; si quod uitari potest, potest homo sine peccato esse, quod uitari potest. Nulla enim ratio uel iustitia patitur saltem dici peccatum, quod uitari nullo modo potest.’

⁷¹ See Pelagius, *leg diu* 4 (PL 30.108-110); Rufinus, *fid* 19, 37, (Miller 1964), 76.26-29, 110.8-10; Sicilian Anonymous, *diu* 6.3, (Caspari 1964), pp. 32.29-33.12

⁷² Pelagius, *uirg* 4, (Halm 1866), p. 228.16-19: ‘aeternam uero uitam non nisi per omnium diuinorum praeceptorum custodiam promereri posse scriptura testatur dicens: si uis ad uitam uenire, serua mandata.’

⁷³ Pelagius, *uirg* 6, (Halm 1866), 232.6-7: ‘uerum nec tibi aliquid impossibile imperatur: impleuit omnia qui quod potuit fecit.’ Cf. *exp Rom* 14.5, (Souter 1926), p. 107.18-19. In light of this affirmation by Pelagius, it is strange that Caspari thought the phrase, ‘uiriliter agentes et ipsius adiutorium implorantes, mandata eius, quantum possumus, custodire studeamus’, *Pam et Oc* (p. 176.12-13) was *ganz unpelagianische*: (Caspari 1964), p. 397 fn. 2. While it is admittedly unusual for a Pelagian to implore divine aid, it is certainly not unusual for a Pelagian to ‘do what he can’ – for that is enough.

⁷⁴ Cf. Pelagius, *exp Rom* 8.32: (Souter 1926), p. 69.18-20; Julian, ap. Augustine, *c lul imp* 1.78, (Zelzer 1974), p. 93.

⁷⁵ Cf. Pelagius, *Dem* 3 (PL 33.1100-1101)

⁷⁶ Cf. Ambrose of Chalcedon, *exp fid Cath* (PLS 1.1685)

⁷⁷ Caelestius, *lib cap* ap. Augustine, *gest Pel* 14.30 (CSEL 42.84.5-6): ‘dei gratiam secundum merita nostra dari, quia si peccatoribus illam det, uidetur esse iniquus.’ Rather similarly, Pelagius argues that grace – in particular, baptismal grace – follows upon and does not proceed consent and choice. Thus, *leg diu* 2 (PL

Pelagius' commentaries when he tirelessly hammers away at the theme that 'God is no respecter of persons' (Rom. 2.11).⁷⁸ If God did indeed show partiality by giving grace to some (but not all!) who do not deserve it, another intolerable consequence would ensue, according to Pelagian thought – fatalism.⁷⁹ Fatalism, particularly under the guise of Manichaeism, was the great bugbear of Pelagius (and countless of his contemporaries).⁸⁰ The popular association between that Manichaeism and fatalism added punch to Julian of Eclanum's round denunciation when he characterised Augustine's attitudes toward sex and sin as Manichean.⁸¹ And yet the accusation of Manichean heresy was made promiscuously in ancient times,⁸² so we would do well to ask what it was particularly about Manicheism that offended Pelagius' sensibilities. First, they believed that Manichean dualism introduced an unacceptable distinction between the goodness of

30.107): 'Sed gratia quidem gratis peccata dimittit, sed cum consensu et uoluntate credentis. [...] Et si ex tota cordis arce credendum est, ut ex credulitatis merito baptismum fidei detur, aqua non sufficit baptizato, quae credentis animum in corde non attingit.'

⁷⁸ Pelagius, *exp* Rom 1.7, 2.10, 1 Cor 7.22, (Souter 1926), pp. 9.24-25, 22.12-15, 165.19; Anon., *indur* 19-21, (Morin 1947), pp. 157-159; cf. Pelagius, *Exp* Rom 2.2, 9.26, Col 1.4, (Souter 1926), pp. 19.8-18, 78.21-22, 451.9-10; Anon., *indur* 47, (Morin 1947), pp. 193-195; Sicilian Anonymous, '*Hon tuae*' 1, (Caspari 1964) p. 7.5; Sicilian Anonymous, *cast* 13.2, (Caspari 1964), p. 152.8-12

⁷⁹ Cf. Anon, *indur* 2, 53, (Morin 1947), pp. 137-139, 201; Pelagius, *leg diu* 7 (PL 30.112C-113A); cf. Sicilian Anonymous, *cast* 8.2, (Caspari 1964), p. 135.19-27.

⁸⁰ E.g., Pelagius, *Dem* 3 (PL 33.1100-1101); *lib arb* fr. 1, 3 (PLS 1, 1539-43); *lib fid* 10, 13 (PL 45, 1718); *exp* Rom 1.2, 6.19, 7.7, 8.7, 9.5, 1 Cor 11.12, 15.45, 2 Cor 3.7, 12.1, Gal 5.21, Col 1.16, 1 Tim 6.3, 6.16, (Souter 1926), pp. 8.20-24, 53.11-13, 56.8-11, 62.17-20, 73.7-11, 189.5-6, 223.19-224.3, 246.19-247.10, 302.13, 336.13-17, 454.12, 499.16-18, 503.13-14. Juan Valero provides an elegantly concise explication of Pelagius' interpretation of Paul as anti-Manichean: (Valero 1980), pp. 206-210.

⁸¹ These accusations occur thickly throughout *c Iul imp*.

⁸² For instance, Jerome in writing to Eustochium bemoans the ease with which sober, right-minded Christians of ascetic inclination could be maligned as Manichean (*ep* 22.13, (Labourt 1949-1954), 1.123.11-14); he himself was smeared as a Manichean by Pelagius, who consistently and pointedly denounces Manichaeism while rebutting Jerome's views (*lib arb* 1-4, PLS 1.1539-1543). If accusations of Manichaeism are a handy way of maligning western ascetics, they are in the east a ready way of casting doubt on an opponent's Christology: (Lieu 1992), pp. 207-210, with copious references. It is no testament to Julian's perspicuity that he lobbed that accusation against the Bishop of Hippo. One may be pardoned for wondering at the zest with which modern scholars have taken up Julian's lead, and sought to further it with evidence of duality in Augustinian thought. But duality does not make for Manicheism, and we can justifiably demand better evidence for the claim that nine years on the periphery of Manichean communities formed Augustine's thought more than forty years of leadership in the Catholic Church did.

creation and the material order.⁸³ Second, Pelagius objected to the rift in Manichean theology between those who were created for salvation and those who were created for damnation.⁸⁴

This sort of fatalism, in addition to blaspheming the Creator who wishes that all should be saved, encourages spiritual laxity and is therefore diametrically opposed to the rigours Pelagius urged on Demetrias and others. Initially it seems strange, then, to find that the Pelagians did not expect many people to be saved; certainly, they did not expect most people to be saved.⁸⁵ And yet, because of the clear principle of accountability to which they could appeal, the apparent similarity is misleading. Unlike the Manichean scheme, Pelagianism does not teach that there are certain people who cannot possibly be saved. Rather, Pelagianism teaches that there are in fact few people who willingly obey God's commands and that in all fairness only few people will enjoy the rewards of obedience, while the majority will suffer the consequences of disobedience. About 1 Cor 1.1, Pelagius writes, 'Anyone who is called to faith is called "by the will of God", but the call is believed by his initiative and decision, as it says in Acts, "I did not doubt the heavenly vision" (Acts 26.19).'⁸⁶ In this brief remark, we catch a glimpse of that process

⁸³ For Pelagius, cf. *exp* Rom 14.20, (Souter 1926), p. 111.4; for Mani, cf. *orig corp suae* 22, 81-85, (Cameron 1979), pp. 22, 64-68.

⁸⁴ This objection can be compared to Irenaeus denouncing Valentinus' three-fold scheme for classifying humans (*pneumatikoi*, *psychikoi* and *hylokoi/somatikoi*) on grounds that it undercuts moral behaviour and smacks of fatalism, inasmuch as it implies that some people are saved regardless of their actions: *adu haer* 1.6.1-7.5, (Rousseau 1965-1982), 1.90-112. Mani also discerns these three components in the make up of human beings, though in context (such as we have it!) the implications are not notably fatalistic: *Keph* 114, (Schmidt 1940-1966), 1.239-240. Nevertheless, election is an important theme in Mani's teaching: e.g., *orig corp suae* 79, (Cameron 1979), p. 62. On Mani's indebtedness to Valentinus, see (Lieu 1992), pp. 64-65. This is an admittedly slender reed on which to hang accusations of fatalism, but 'Manichean' and 'fatalism' go together in the tradition just like 'bread' and 'butter'.

⁸⁵ E.g., Pelagius, *leg diu* 7.2 (PL 30.112-113); *Cel* 10, (de Hartel 1999), p. 443; Sicilian Anonymous, '*Hum reflit*' 3.1, (Caspari 1964), p. 17.13-17

⁸⁶ Pelagius, *exp* 1 Cor 1.1, (Souter 1926), p. 128.3-6: 'Uoluntate dei uocatur quisque uocatur ad fidem, [sec:] sua sponte, et suo arbitrio credit[ur], sicut ait in Actibus [Apostolorum]: "non fui incredulous caelestis uisioni".'

at work: God calls, thus discharging divine responsibility and satisfying the divine will that all be saved; but it lies with each person called to make of that call what he will.

Alongside the exhortations to virtue that characterise the writings that make up the Pelagian corpus, there are persistent hints and intimations at the richness with which those who run the race well will be rewarded. This rhetoric of merit and reward,⁸⁷ which in the celebrated letter to Demetrias periodically lapses into distastefully construing the Christian life as an opportunistic scramble to augment the Anicii's traditional splendour with heavenly glory,⁸⁸ constantly reinforces the Pelagian emphasis on judgment.⁸⁹ As we have noted, Pelagius' emphasis on judgment in turn depends upon the inviolability of the human will. In his letter to Demetrias, Pelagius goes further and explains that the will is indefectible as well – and even if habit periodically undermines good intention, habit is itself built up by the deliberate operation of the will.⁹⁰ On this basis, Pelagius rather splendidly writes about 'the natural sanctity presiding in the citadel of the soul',⁹¹ which sanctity is bound up in recognising and worshipping God.⁹²

⁸⁷ Cf. Pelagius, *leg diu* 4 (PL 30.109): 'Non nobis blandiri debemus in factis iussorum, si in prohibitorum transgressionem peccemus, cum transgressionis crimen benefacti meritum tollat.'

⁸⁸ Pelagius, *Dem* 14 (PL 33.1108-1109). The Sicilian would doubtless not be amused: see *mal doct* 18.3, (Caspari 1964), pp. 103-104. But Pelagius is no less capable of contrasting the woes of this life – and even the glories of this life – with the heavenly joys that await the faithful; see *leg diu* 6 (PL 30.111-112).

⁸⁹ Cf. Pelagius, *Dem* 1 ('Et ideo contenta non est communi hoc mediocri genere uiuendi; et quod facile ipsa multorum societate uilescat, nouum aliquid et inusitatum requirit, praecipuum ac singulare quoddam flagitare.' (PL 33.1099)), 10 ('Fugienda tibi lata illa via est, quam multorum ad mortem cunctum comitatus terit, et ad uitam aeternam angusti illius itineris, quod pauci reperiunt, callis tenendus est.' (PL 33.1106-1107)), 14 ('[Deus] tibi que contra diabolum dimicanti paract aeternitatis coronam, et coeleste praemium incitamentum victoriae facit.' (PL 33.1109)), 17 ('Nunc ergo ad omnem morum perfectionem mentis aciem intende, et ad coeleste praemium coelestem vitam para.' (PL 33.1110-1111)). So, too, *uirg*, *passim*, but see esp. 4, (Halm 1866), p. 229.1-3; 12, p. 241.16-19; and 19, p. 250.12-19 – this virgin's glory is to be as dazzling as the hereditary dignity of Demetrias.

⁹⁰ Pelagius, *Dem* 8 (PL 33.1104-1105); cf. *leg diu* 8 (PL 30.113-114), *exp Rom* 7.15-24, (Souter 1926), pp. 58.15-60.9; Sicilian Anonymous, *mal doct* 4.2, (Caspari 1964), pp. 71.19-72.7, and *diu* 1.1, (Caspari 1964), p.25.6-12. See (Greshake 1972), pp. 88-93.

⁹¹ Pelagius, *Dem* 4 (PL 33.1101-1102): 'Est enim, inquam, in animis nostris naturalis quaedam, ut ita dixerim, sanctitas, quae uelut in arce animi praesidens, exercet mali bonique iudicium; et ut honestis rectisque actibus fauet, ita sinistra opera condemnat, atque ad conscientiae testimonium diuersas partes domestica quadam lege dijudicat: nec ullo prorsus ingenio, aut fucato aliquo argumentorum colore decipit;

Pelagians of course acknowledge that the will is a gift of God. Like every gift of God, it is a good thing: ‘... how, then, is the verse to be understood, that “Each one has his own gift from God” (1 Cor 7.5)? The gift of his own free will, of course, in conjunction with which not only the state of being either married or unmarried is given to them, but even the choice of good and evil, life and death, as Scripture says: “Before a man is good and evil, life and death; what pleases him, will be given to him” (Sir. 15.18).’⁹³ As Greshake has perceptively observed, Pelagius is able to integrate his accounts of creation and salvation at just this point. Pelagius’ claims about the goodness of the will as a product of divine creation, which Pelagius (following the preamble to St. John’s Gospel) associates with the Logos, dovetail his message about the salvific work accomplished by Christ, the Incarnate Logos.⁹⁴ And yet, Pelagius does not allow that God could impinge upon the free operation of the will. He even explains Rom. 8.32 (‘He who did not even spare His Son...’) by saying, ‘He allowed Him to be handed over, so that He might preserve liberty of will for those who handed Him over and show us an example of patience.’⁹⁵ Even at the heart of the Christian mystery, then, Pelagius finds evidence of God respecting, even deferring to human freedom. Rees expressed the matter concisely: ‘His whole teaching of grace was constructed around the central premise of the absolute freedom of man’s will when faced with a choice between good

ipsis nos cogitationibus, fidelissimis et integerrimis sane testibus, aut arguit, aut defendit.’ Cf. Pelagius, *leg diu* 2 (PL 30.107): ‘the whole citadel of the heart’.

⁹² Cf. Pelagius, *Dem* 2 (PL 33.1100), ‘Neque enim nudum illum [sc., hominem] ac sine praesidio reliquit [sc., Deus], nec diuersis periculis uelut exposuit infirmum; sed quem inermem extrinsecus fecerat, melius intus armauit, ratione scilicet atque prudential; ut per intellectum uigoremque mentis, quo caeteris praestabat animalibus, factorem omnium solus agnosceret et inde seruiret Deo, unde aliis dominabatur.’ Cf. *leg diu* 3 (PL 30.107-108)

⁹³ Sicilian Anonymous, *cast* 10.5, (Caspari 1964), p. 142.18-23: ‘...quomodo ergo intellegendum est: Unusquisque proprium habet donum a Deo? Propriae scilicet uoluntatis, iuxta quam illi non modo nubendi et non nubendi, uerum etiam boni et mali, mortis et uitae electio datur, scriptura dicente: Ante hominem bonum et malum, uita et mors; quod placuerit ei, dabitur illi.’

and evil, a freedom given to man by God but, once given, not subject to God's interference.'⁹⁶

By the same token, Pelagius' reference to the 'deliberation of the will' is highly unusual.⁹⁷ Generally, Pelagians show no interest in what the Greek Fathers and especially Maximus the Confessor would come to discuss as the 'deliberative' or '*gnomic* will.'⁹⁸ In this tradition, the will takes an active role in making decisions, not least because sin occludes human moral vision and such decisions are consequently necessary.⁹⁹ For the Pelagians, this is not an option: first, because the conscience is intact and indeed is the touchstone of moral behaviour;¹⁰⁰ second, because the will only effects the decisions made by the rational soul. Their references to the will thus typically dissociate it from deliberation and decision-making and allot those functions to reason. Pelagius himself does this in propounding the Christian life to Demetrias. He writes, 'For the adornment of the rational soul is built on this judgment of twin paths, on this freedom of both parts. Herein, I say, consists all the honour of our nature, herein the dignity...'¹⁰¹

⁹⁴ See (Greshake 1972), pp. 121-124.

⁹⁵ Pelagius, *exp* Rom 8.32, (Souter 1926), p. 69.18-20.

⁹⁶ (Rees 1998), 1.34.

⁹⁷ See n. 68, above.

⁹⁸ For Athanasius, *def* 2 (PG 28.540D), and Anastasius of Sinai, *hod* 2 (PG 89.61C-65A), *thelēmata gnōmika* account for why some people become farmers and others become sailors, why some sleep and others do not, et c.: in general, they account for questions of how one chooses to live. Maximus, *Pyrr* (PG 91.308B-309A), takes the question from that point and develops the term so that it refers primarily to the deliberation such choices entail. The Damascene takes this as normative and makes Maximus' stipulation the touchstone for 'speaking properly' about Christ (*κυριολέκτειν* – perhaps evidence for St John's sense of humour?): *fid* 3.14 (PG 94.1044B-1045C), cf. *uolunt* 20 (PG 95.152A).

⁹⁹ See Maximus, *op* 3 (PL 91.45-56); and (Louth 1996), pp. 59-62. Cf. Basil of Seleucia, s. 4.1, 4.3 (PG 85.64A), where he affirms that the will can become sick.

¹⁰⁰ Pelagius, *Dem* 4 (PL 33.1101): 'Age iam ad animae nostrae secreta ueniamus. Seipsum unusquisque attentius respiciat: interrogemus quid de hoc sentient propriae cogitationes; ferat sententiam de naturae bono ipsa conscientia; instruamur domestico magisterio animi, et mentis bona non aliunde magis quaeque, quam ab ipsa mente, discamus.' Cf. *exp* Rom 2.12, 2.15, 5.14, (Souter 1926), pp. 22.20, 23.16-20, 46.10-14: the conscience is Paul's 'lex naturae'.

¹⁰¹ Pelagius, *Dem* 3 (PL 33.1100); cf. *exp* 2 Cor 8.11, (Souter 1926), p. 276.5-10: 'Complete what you voluntarily began: for an end is expected for every good work, since, just as no deed is accomplished by the

Glory redounds to the rational soul when the will functions properly, because by one's reasoning one's will is directed. Pelagius thus subordinates will to reason.¹⁰² The will simply functions as reason dictates. Ambrose of Chalcedon likewise states very clearly: 'It is therefore impious to say that God does not wish us to be sinless; that he not appear the author of our wickedness, it remains for us to confess that we are sinners now, not because we cannot avoid sin, but because we *are unwilling* to do so due to our negligence.'¹⁰³ The only proviso to be added is that the Sicilian Anonymous, that Archpelagian, recognised that natural limitations can thwart a person's will. By way of example, he adduces a number of physical limitations to the pursuit of lust: 'Immune to and free from all these necessities is chastity, which nature furnishes with such strong protection that it is preserved even when its possessor is unwilling.'¹⁰⁴ Because sin is unnatural, this is largely incidental; but it does remind us that what was at stake during the debates was not the intellectual satisfaction of having a more thorough system than one's opponent – it was a way of making sense of life.

Because the will follows reason without hindrance, praise and reproof are appropriate to reason, not to will. Habits can be bad, and so can decisions, but the will itself is a marvel: even when it is put to bad use, it is good.¹⁰⁵ This means that, if a Pelagian were speaking strictly, he would not upbraid someone for having a bad will, but

unwilling, the will is also fruitless to those who have it without doing anything.' Note that Pelagius talks about the person who is (or should be!) acting, not the will.

¹⁰² Pelagius, *Dem* 3 (PL 33.1101): 'Nec est quo magis rationabilis creatura cæteris præferatur, nisi quod, cum omnia alia conditionis tantum ac necessitates bonum habeant, hæc sola habet etiam uoluntatis.'

¹⁰³ Ambrose of Chalcedon, *exp fid Cath* (PLS 1.1685): 'Unde quia impium est dicere deum nolle ut simus sine peccato; ne auctor uideatur nostrae malitiae, superest ut fateamur quia peccatores ideo sumus, non quia non possumus sed quia *nolumus* uitare peccatum per negligentiam nostram.' (emp. added)

¹⁰⁴ Sicilian Anonymous, *cast* 3.6, (Caspari 1964), p. 126.18-20: 'Ab his omnibus necessitatibus castitas immunis et libera est, quam tam forti munit natura praesidio, *ut possessore suo nonnumquam inuito seruetur*.' (emp. added)

rather for putting his will to bad use. The will is therefore unimpeachable with respect to sin, and indefectible with respect to its operation. As we have seen, for a person to commit a sinful act, that act must issue from the will. But the will is not tainted in the process; to indulge in personification, the will is only doing its job. The Stoic overtones are patent.¹⁰⁶

- How the will functions

Pelagius' insistence on maintaining the sovereignty of the will eventually brought him into conflict with Augustine and others. What Augustine found so unacceptable is most spectacularly evident when Julian, in a perfectly natural development of the Pelagian view, maintains that by free will Christians are 'emancipated from God'.¹⁰⁷ In the Roman legal tradition, one is not emancipated by another from some third party; emancipation is instead the process whereby the *paterfamilias* grants autonomy to one of

¹⁰⁵ Sicilian Anonymous, *cast* 3.6: 'Quod cum ita sit, hoc quoque ipsum quod etiam mala facere possumus, bonum est: bonum, inquam, quia boni partem meliorem facit.'

¹⁰⁶ For instance, Diogenes Laërtius (7.108 = (von Arnim 1903-1924), 3.495) delineates a marvellously straightforward Stoic view of doing one's duty that presumes the choices made by reason are enacted with no further ado; Seneca (*ep* 95.57 = (von Arnim 1903-1924), 3.517) explains the aetiology of right actions in terms of right actions proceeding from right will which proceeds from the right habit of mind, which in turn proceeds from living one's whole life in accordance with the laws, and this allows us to appreciate his extraordinarily simple injunction to Lucilius, 'Quid tibi opus est, ut bonus sis? uelle.' (*ep* 80.4; (Gummere 1917-1925), 2.214); and we are similarly told that, according to the Stoics, '*technê* and *aretê*' account for virtue and that 'all skill is a system of contemplations exercised jointly: reason follows contemplations; custom follows joint exercise...', (von Arnim 1903-1924), 3.214. For a general discussion of will according to the Stoics, see (Dihle 1982), esp. pp. 60-65; and (Rist 1969), pp. 219-232. It also bears mentioning that Cicero (*fat* 39 = (von Arnim 1903-1924), 2.974) and Augustine (*ciu Dei* 5.10 = (von Arnim 1903-1924), 2.291) observe that the Stoics build a hedge about the will in their discussion of fate, despite their general affirmation of fate, so as to keep it from impinging upon the free operation of the will; and that the Pelagian call for utter sinlessness echoes the Stoic equalising of all sins, (von Arnim 1903-1924), 3.528-533; see (Rist 1969), pp. 81-96.

¹⁰⁷ Julian, ap. Augustine, *C Iul imp.* 1.78, (Zelzer 1974), p. 93: 'Libertas arbitrii, qua a deo emancipatus homo est, in ammittendi peccati et abstinendi a peccato possibilitate consistit.' Cf. *ibid.* 5.28, 6.18 (PL 45.1466-1467, 1541).

his dependants.¹⁰⁸ This is consistent with Pelagius' emphasis on the sovereignty of human will.¹⁰⁹ Although other Christian authors misappropriate the term *emancipatio* to talk of Christ liberating Christians from sin,¹¹⁰ Julian's use of the term faithfully preserves its traditional meaning. Julian means that God sets us free from himself so that God's will does not impinge upon our will. However bold Julian's statement of it may appear, this is as characteristically and unexceptionally Pelagian a belief as one could hope to find.¹¹¹ This kind of independence from God that humans enjoy is yet another reason for the Pelagians to insist on the justice of God's judgment.

The centrality of just judgment for Pelagius' thought is not unusual. Divine judgment plays a central role in Origen's theology, for instance. This appears in Rufinus' translation of *On first principles*.¹¹² It has been amply demonstrated that Pelagius knew and used Rufinus' translation of Origen's *Commentary on Romans*.¹¹³ That link is so

¹⁰⁸ The sources for this practice are as follows: 1) *Twelve Tables* 4.2: 'Si pater filium ter venunduit, filius a patre liber esto.' (Warmington 1938), p. 442; 2) Ulpian, *fr* 10.1: 'Liberi parentum potestate liberantur emancipatione, id est si posteaquam mancipati fuerint manumissi sint. Sed filius quidem ter mancipatus ter manumissus *sui iuris fit*' (emphasis added). (Warmington 1938), pp. 440-442; 3) Gaius, *inst* 1.132-134, (Reinach 1950), pp. 25-26, who uses the similar phrase 'sui iuris efficiatur' to describe the freedom this ritual confers. Boethius knows this practice (*Com top Cic*, PL 64.1075), as does Isidore of Seville (*Etym* 5.17, PL 82.355).

¹⁰⁹ Pelagius anticipates Julian by maintaining that our ability to choose makes us 'sui iuris' (*Dem.* 4, PL 33.1101). Therefore, even granting the excellent distinction of the *pelagisch* from the *pelagianisch*, Greshake is wrong in insisting that emancipation from God does not follow human freedom according to *pelagisch* thought: (Greshake 1972), pp. 65-66.

¹¹⁰ E.g., Pacian of Barcelona (fl. 360-390) effortlessly conflates *liberatio* and *emancipatio*; *paen* 3.3, (Granado 1995), p. 122: 'His igitur nos omnibus multisque praeterea carnalibus vitiis, ut citius ad destinata quisque perueniat, sanguis Domini liberauit, redemptos a seruitute legis et libertate fidei emancipatos'; see also Tertullian, *fug* 12 (PL 2.114) and cf. *pud* 21 (PL 2.1036; Peter's judgment at Acts 5.10-11 set Christians free from the old law); Prudentius, *cath* 7.184 (PL 59.854), cf. *peri* 5.345 (PL 60.398). The Vulgate of St Paul provides a helpful contrast at Rom 8.1-2: 'There is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ has set me free [*liberauit me*] from the law of sin and death.' Meanwhile, Ambrose of Milan uses *emancipatio* accurately in its technical sense: *fid* 92 (PL 16.635).

¹¹¹ It is in this context that Brown rightly noted 'the Pelagian is contemptuous of babies'. Pelagius, Caelestius, Julian and the Sicilian placed a premium on spiritual maturity. This is another facet of their insistence on responsibility. Brown contrasts the Pelagian ideal of autonomy implicit in being 'emancipated from God' to the Augustinian ideal of dependence implicit in being children of God.

¹¹² E.g., Origen, *prin* 2.9.5-8, (Crouzel 1978-1984), 1.360-372.

¹¹³ (Smith 1918-1919)

close that one modern translator of Rufinus-Origen has felt the need to defend the earlier commentary from anachronistically Pelagian interpretations.¹¹⁴ That such a defence is reasonable is a tribute to Jerome's success in tarring Pelagius with the Origenist brush.¹¹⁵ But just because a notorious controversialist made the accusation is no reason to rule it out of court. Pelagius' attitude toward Origenism is complex. His reliance on Rufinus' translations notwithstanding, Pelagius had little patience with the more extravagant claims associated with the great Alexandrian theologian and he castigated the Origenian interpretation of Eph. 1.4 ('He chose us for Himself before the foundation of the world') – paraphrased as 'the souls in heaven before they were separated'¹¹⁶ – as 'what certain heretics dreamed up'.¹¹⁷ Dr. Evans plausibly suggested that Pelagius aimed his *De natura* at Jerome's latent Origenist inclinations (that is, rather than at Augustine).¹¹⁸ While Pelagius' barbed remarks show he was critical of some ostensibly Origenian beliefs, the accuracy with which he makes his point shows that he was capable of finding his way round Origenian theology.¹¹⁹ And it was by the translation of Rufinus that Pelagius came to know the *Sentences* of Sextus,¹²⁰ a handbook of Christian – or

¹¹⁴ See (Scheck 2001), pp. 1-48

¹¹⁵ (Brown 1972b); (Duval 1970); (Evans 1968b)

¹¹⁶ Cf. Origen, *prin* 3.5.4, (Crouzel 1978-1984), 4.226, *CIo* 19.22.5.149, (Blanc 1966-1992), 4.138; and the exegetically wayward young Jerome, *CEph* 1.4 (PL 26.446-448) – on which, see (Schatikin 1970). Rufinus and Pelagius were well aware of Jerome's indebtedness to Origen in this commentary and, when Jerome unwisely threw down the gauntlet (*ep* 84.2, (Labourt 1949-1954), 4.125.23-126.29), each of them in turn took it up (Rufinus, *c Hier* 1.22-44, (Simonetti 1961), pp. 56-80. See Evans's excellent discussion: (Evans 1968b), pp. 6-25.

¹¹⁷ Pelagius, *exp Eph* 1.4, (Souter 1926), p. 345.16-17

¹¹⁸ (Evans 1968b), pp. 24-25

¹¹⁹ Cf. Pelagius, *exp Rom* 11.24, (Souter 1926), p. 90.19-22: 'Quia iam olim patres eorum, naturalem obliti legem, degenerauerant a natura, et per successiones peccandi, consuetudine permanente, quasi naturaliter amari et infructuosi esse coeperant.' It is difficult to imagine Origen, Rufinus or Evagrius finding anything objectionable in that explanation – particularly since Pelagius does not fix the identity of the 'fathers' in question, this sounds a lot like a mythical account of sin. Rufinus of Syria also based his denunciations of Origen on at least a topical knowledge of the Alexandrian's writings; see *fid* 17 (against the necessity of creation); 20 (against the *apokatastasis*); 21 (against astral souls); 22 (against Origenian allegory); 27 and 36 (against double creation); and Sr. Miller's notes, *ad loc*: (Miller 1964).

¹²⁰ See (Evans 1968b), pp. 43-65.

Christianised – maxims that were happily compatible with Pelagius’ teaching and had the not incidental benefit of being attributed to a remote and practically legendary pope. (As a curious aside, we find that in *Vat. lat.* 3834 (9th/10th C.), *On wealth*, *On bad teachers*, and *On chastity* are attributed to ‘St. Sextus, Pope and martyr’.¹²¹) Pelagius could, and sometimes did,¹²² appeal to this work for his views on sin¹²³ and sinlessness,¹²⁴ for the importance of reality over appearance in ethics,¹²⁵ for the priority of doing works over teaching others,¹²⁶ for the relative value of marriage,¹²⁷ and for a general affirmation of individual responsibility and capability with respect to spiritual and ethical improvement;¹²⁸ the Sicilian would have been gratified by the indications that wealth is an impediment to salvation.¹²⁹ Pelagius would have therefore had recourse to Rufinus’ translations, and been shaped by them at least in some measure by the Origenian tradition.¹³⁰

Pelagius could shear off the cosmic dimensions of Origen’s judgment and still remind his audience of the awesome power of God’s sovereign judgment with the unerring skill of a consummate preacher.¹³¹ God judges accurately, and God’s judgments are unsparing, as Pelagius is capable of making fearfully clear: ‘Let no one delude, I say, or deceive himself – God does not love the wicked, God does not love the sinner, does

¹²¹ (Caspari 1964), pp. 227-230, 329-335

¹²² According to Augustine, *nat et grat* 64.77 (CSEL 60.291-291), Pelagius cited *Ench Sex* 36, 46 and 60, (Chadwick 1959), pp. 17, 19. In this passage, Augustine accepted the author as ‘beatissimus Xystus Romanae ecclesiae episcopus et domini martyr’, though he later expressly reversed his decision: ‘sed postea legi Sexti philosophi esse, non Xysti christiani’, *retr* 2.42.68, (CSEL36.180).

¹²³ *Ench Sex* 12, (Chadwick 1959), p. 13

¹²⁴ *Ench Sex* 8, 36, 60 (Chadwick 1959), pp. 13, 17, 19

¹²⁵ *Ench Sex* 64, 189, (Chadwick 1959), pp. 21, 35

¹²⁶ *Ench Sex* 356, 359, 368, 383, (Chadwick 1959), pp. 53, 55, 57

¹²⁷ *Ench Sex* 230a-b, (Chadwick 1959), p. 39

¹²⁸ *Ench Sex* 255, 306 (Chadwick 1959), p. 41, 47

¹²⁹ *Ench Sex* 193, 227, (Chadwick 1959), pp. 35, 39

¹³⁰ On Pelagius’ use of Origen’s writings via Rufinus, see (Bohlin 1957), pp. 65-69, 77-103.

¹³¹ Pelagius dedicates practically the whole of *uit chr* to preaching about God’s judgment.

not love the unjust, the greedy, the cruel or the impious...'¹³² Fear, according to the Sicilian, is a legitimate and powerful motivating force for Christians.¹³³ This realisation gives additional urgency to Pelagius' and the Sicilian's cry for 'authentic Christianity'. Nothing less will do. Failure, the Pelagians would be sure we understand, is the sole responsibility of the one who fails; to suggest otherwise is to endorse fatalism. As we have just noted, the Pelagians bolstered this argument with a robust affirmation of the will's capacity to act without interference. This is elegantly summarised with Julian's claim that 'we confess free will to be an ample witness to divine fairness, such that, at the time when each of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive recompense according to whatever we did in the body, whether good or evil, God is seen never to judge unjustly; He never holds a sin against anyone unless he who is punished for it could have also avoided it.'¹³⁴ Their preaching is therefore underwritten by a direct, simple and intuitive assessment of how the will functions – one that Cassian repeatedly violates.

- The important difference in Cassian's audience

We do not know what brought Cassian to Marseilles. Some scholars have argued that he was originally from the area, which would mean he was simply returning home. Other scholars have argued just as plausibly that Cassian was from Dobrudja,

¹³² Pelagius, *uit chr* 4 (PL 50.388); cf. *leg diu* 7.2 (PL 30.112-113); and *exp Rom* 2.3-4, 8.15, 13.4, (Souter 1926), pp. 19.22-20.19, 64.13-15, 102.11-13.

¹³³ Sicilian Anonymous, *mal doct* 4.1, 5.5, 13.1-2, 14.5-16.3, 17.1-2, 19.2, 24.2-3, (Caspari 1964), pp. 71.16-18, 74.23-26, 90.7-91.24, 93.7-96.33, 100.16-102.3, 104.22-105.21, 112.11-113.13.

¹³⁴ Julian *ap. Augustine, c lul imp* 3.107.1, (Zelzer 1974), p. 427

Romania.¹³⁵ (It should be noted that Cassian's arrival in Marseilles does not militate against an Eastern European origin. Marseilles was a major port-of-call for Mediterranean vessels and this would have made travel to Marseilles a simple matter.)¹³⁶ Whatever else we may not know about Cassian's time there, we do know that he founded two monastic establishments in Marseilles,¹³⁷ and that he got on well enough with the local clergy to dedicate his books to some of them. Prosper's anxiety about the dissemination of suspicious ideas by Cassian also gives us some information: Cassian was a respected member of the Christian scene and, though we may presume that his monastery was the locus for his activities, his teachings must have reached the lay Christians.¹³⁸ But it was only when he received the commission to pen a treatise against Nestorius that Cassian addressed his writings to the Christian world at large. Indeed, there is only slight evidence from the earlier works of what Cassian thought about secular Christians.¹³⁹ While he thought the earliest Christians had a strong ascetic and communal orientation, and he thought subsequent generations fell from this, all this only means Cassian was committed to ascetic, communal Christianity. His own history makes it clear that he recognised the difference between monasteries and the community described in Acts. We should be wary about extrapolating Cassian's attitude toward secular

¹³⁵ A thorough discussion of this debate is available in (Vannier 1999), pp. 23-27. Unlike Dr. Vannier, I am fully persuaded that Cassian was from modern-day Romania.

¹³⁶ (Rougé 1966), pp. 141-142; (Bats 1992); (Hermay 1999). Paulinus, *car* 24, relates the travels of Martinian, who departing from Narbonne was shipwrecked near Marseilles, 'daughter of the Greeks, planted on Gallic soil' (ll. 305-6), and was cared for there by the brethren (PL 61,621). Cf. the travels of Posthumian from Alexandria to Narbonne, who similarly ended up in Marseilles: Sulpicius Severus, *dial* 1.1.3, (Halm 1866), pp. 152.10-153.3.

¹³⁷ Gennadius, *uir inl* 61 (PL 58.1095): '[Cassianus] apud Massiliam presbyter condidit duo monasteria, id est, uirorum et mulierum, quae usque hodie extant.'

¹³⁸ Cf. Prosper, *c conl* 1.1 (PL 51.215): 'Siquidem habentes speciem pietatis in studio, cuius uirtutem diffitentur in sensu, trahunt ad se multos ineruditos, et non habentia spirituum discretionem corda conturbant... Non ergo negligendum est hoc malum, quod ab occultis paruisque seminibus augetur quotidie, et ab ortus suo latius longiusque distenditur...' The hidden seeds are sprouting from monasteries, not least Cassian's: *ibid.* 2.1 (PL 51.217-218).

Christians from what he tells us about monastic Christians. His early writings do not show particular thought for secular Christians. In short, Cassian's earlier writings were written for the benefit of a select, monastic audience and they say very little either to or about secular Christians in general.

Here, the contrast to Pelagius could hardly be greater. Pelagianism, so far as we know about its social context, was a secular movement. To be sure, Pelagius and company promoted asceticism. But there is no evidence of any Pelagians founding monasteries or convents. Pelagius is traditionally called a monk,¹⁴⁰ and I do not know of any reasons to doubt this, but the reforms he urged were designed to bolster the ascetic, spiritual and moral lives of secular Christians. Pelagius was certainly aware of monasticism and his famous fleeting remark ('I want you to be called a Christian, not a monk') actually shows that he had high expectations of monks, too: monks are supposed to be set apart from the world, and Pelagius' jibe is apparently directed at somebody who thought he could stay in the hustle and bustle of civic life and call himself a monk all the while.¹⁴¹ The important thing to note, though, is that Pelagius does not preach to monks. He preaches to Demetrias Anicia, to Celantia the married lady, and others.

This must be borne in mind when we compare his message to Cassian's so that extraneous factors do not conflate the results of the comparison. Yet despite the need to account for differences that stem from the exigencies of addressing different audiences, or at least to insure that those differences do not distort the comparison, it is still possible

¹³⁹ E.g., at *conl* 21.33.2-4, Cassian addresses sex in marriage.

¹⁴⁰ E.g., Augustine, *gest Pel* 19.43 (CSEL 42.98.17-18): 'His recitatis synodus dixit: "quid ad haec quae lecta sunt capitula dicit praesens Pelagius monachus?"' This is also how Photius describes Pelagius: *cod* 53, (Henry 1959-1991), p. 42.

¹⁴¹ This remark does not prove that Pelagius was not a monk; it just shows that Pelagius had a very precise, but not obviously universally held, understanding of what the term meant.

to make a valid comparison. This is because the Pelagians explicitly predicated their message on the belief that the same demands apply to all Christians. Because the Pelagians claimed their message had universal application, we can take Pelagianism as the base line for our comparison. We have seen that Pelagian preaching presupposes the autonomous and indefectible operation of the will. We have also seen that this presupposition is an integral part of their message such that it cannot be called into question without compromising the platform on which the message is based. It will therefore be convenient for us to now consider what Cassian teaches about the will. In particular, we will want to assess what Cassian says about God's interaction with the will.

- How the will dysfunctions: the tip of the sword

Beginning with Cassian's *Institutes*, we find straight off that he espouses a view of the will and of willing that is more complicated than that presupposed by the Pelagian message. In the context of coenobitic life, which is the end to which Cassian's *Institutes* contribute, wilful monks are a serious problem and so he devotes considerable attention to analysing the will, treating the corrupt will, and ultimately subordinating even the good will to the needs of the community and chiefly to the will of God. (Of course, there is no conflict between the legitimate needs of the community and the will of God who teaches that we are to love God above all and our neighbours as ourselves.) It is therefore significant that Cassian begins his discussion of prayer – the first practical and theological topic he discusses – by asserting the foundation of monasticism in the

tradition of the elders with an unflattering contrast to fancies of individual will.¹⁴² In placing the will to the fore, Cassian has already departed from the style of Pelagianism in which the will is generally assumed to operate without ado. But this is only the initial departure. What Cassian is prepared to find, and what he consequently prepares his readers to find, is that the will can be ineffectual,¹⁴³ it can be inadequate to the necessities preliminary to salvation,¹⁴⁴ and it can even be corrupt and wicked.¹⁴⁵ From time to time, he talks of temptations like avarice as ‘the will to possess’¹⁴⁶ – which opens up the possibility of criticising the will, a possibility that is not present for Pelagians. Cassian even allows for condemning sins where the will is present, but the opportunity wanting.¹⁴⁷ All of this is preliminary evidence that Cassian understands the will to be insufficient for spiritual progress and in fact to be often bankrupt.

Cassian traces these problems back to the initial and archetypal sin, pride. All the hideous conditions he has described are advanced cases of the will’s pathology, which tellingly began when man ‘believed himself capable of attaining the glory of the Godhead by his freedom of will and hard work’¹⁴⁸. Cassian proposes radical measures to deal with

¹⁴² Cassian, *inst* 2.3

¹⁴³ Cf. Cassian, *inst* 5.22

¹⁴⁴ Cassian, *inst* 12.4.2: ‘...et ob hoc elatus, tamquam qui ad perseuerantiam puritatis huius diuino non egeret auxilio, Deo se similem iudicauit, utpote qui nullius indigeret quemadmodum Deus, *liberi scilicet arbitrii facultate confisus*, per illam credens adfluenter sibimet omnia subpeditari, quae ad consummationem uirtutum uel perennitatem summae beatitudinis pertinerent.’ (emp. added); cf. 12.10, 12.11.2-3; *conl* 9.7.1-2, 10.13.1.

¹⁴⁵ Cassian, *inst* 7.3.2 (‘malae uoluntatis arbitrio’), 7.5 (‘corruptae ac malae uoluntatis arbitrio’), *conl* 12.2.4, 17.16.2, 24.23.1. Theodore says at *conl* 6.16.1 that the fallen angels also have corrupt wills; cf. *conl* 8.6.

¹⁴⁶ Cassian, *inst* 7.21 (‘uoluntas possidendi’), cf. 7.25 (‘reseruandi uoluntas’), 7.31 (‘uoluntas ultionis’); *conl* 5.4.4

¹⁴⁷ Cassian, *inst* 7.22, cf. 8.20.3; *conl* 5.7.1, 16.18.1. He also suggests that a person can be commended for a good will even if the results of his actions are bad, *conl* 17.12.3, 17.17.5.

¹⁴⁸ Cassian, *inst* 12.5: ‘Dum enim gloriam deitatis arbitrii libertate et industria sua credidit se posse conquirere, etiam illam perdidit, quam adeptus fuerat gratia conditoris.’

it. The renunciant must conquer his will, overcome it, even kill it.¹⁴⁹ More than this, though, Cassian says the will must be crucified – a deeply resonant metaphor, because Cassian identifies Christ’s abrogation of his will as part of the Incarnation.¹⁵⁰ It is a message therefore sanctioned on the highest Christian authority. Such dramatic action is needed in order to restore control over one’s will so that one can subordinate one’s own will and desires for the good of oneself and of others,¹⁵¹ in accordance with the mystery of the Incarnation. Once the will has been remanded to the control of the renunciant, the renunciant can offer ‘voluntary’ sacrifices, which are especially pleasing to God, as David testifies (Pss. 54.6, 119.108).¹⁵² And again the pre-eminent exemplar is Christ himself.¹⁵³ From this stage of spiritual maturation, people can meaningfully be said to will their salvation,¹⁵⁴ because their will has been assimilated to God’s will; whereas before, there is an abiding danger that they do not in fact will for salvation, but instead for some arbitrary satisfaction.¹⁵⁵ This is the pre-eminent lesson of life in the monastery, which novices must learn if they are to excel in the life of Christian monasticism.¹⁵⁶ The contrast between, on the one hand, voluntarily sacrificing oneself and, on the other hand, voluntarily allowing oneself to be dominated by passions¹⁵⁷ and so handing oneself over

¹⁴⁹ Cassian, *inst* 4.8, 4.39, 4.43; *conl* 7.6.1, 24.5.2, 24.26.13.

¹⁵⁰ Cassian, *inst* 4.34-35; cf. 3.3.6: Christ is capable of laying down His life willingly because His life is characterised by renouncing His own will in obedience to the Father. See also *conl* 3.4.10, 16.6.4, 18.7.7, 19.6.6, 19.8.3, 24.23.4, 24.26.14.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Cassian, *inst* 5.23. Contrast to this Abba Joseph’s denunciation of those who prefer their own will to their brothers’ refreshment: *conl* 17.23. His discussion of friendship also turns on unanimity of will: *conl* 16.3.2,4-5, 16.5-6.1, 16.23.1.

¹⁵² Cassian, *inst* 3.2, some examples of which include extra prayers and study (2.6), fasting (5.24), and indeed the offering of the good will itself (12.14.2); cf. *conl* 12.12.4, 21.3, 21.29.2, 21.30.2-3, 21.33.6-7, 24.23.2, 24.26.11.

¹⁵³ Cassian, *inst* 3.3.6

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Cassian, *inst* 10.10, 11.4; *conl* 11.12.1, 12.15.1; from this stage, a person can also have a praiseworthy will: cf. *conl* 1.10.5, 1.14.9.

¹⁵⁵ Cassian, *conl* 21.14.5, cf. 24.9.1

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Cassian, *conl* 18.7.3-4, 24.26.14

¹⁵⁷ Cassian, *inst* 5.22

to Satan¹⁵⁸ gives us a sense for the span that separates a healthy will from a corrupt will.

In what is perhaps evidence of the greatest success according to this way of thinking,

Cassian relates the valediction of a dying monk: *numquam meam feci uoluntatem*.¹⁵⁹

This is paradoxical, but it must be remembered that Cassian takes a very strong line on

Phil 2.13: God does indeed work in us the willing.¹⁶⁰ This precludes pride, but it also

enables a humble monk to say truthfully at the end of his days that he has not done his

own will: for he has done God's will.¹⁶¹ This is the mark of perfection.¹⁶²

The high watermark of Cassian's early discussion about the will is *inst* 12.18.

Here, we find Cassian expansively working out his account of what God does for our

salvation that elaborates on earlier, almost furtive remarks about Christ's active

involvement in the extirpation of vice.¹⁶³ But while the relevant implications have to be

teased out of those remarks, this paragraph marks a complete and decisive rejection of

Pelagian values, as we shall see. First, it is convenient to provide a translation of that

passage:

Let us thank Him not only for these [deeds], that He made us rational or gave us the power of free will or bestowed on us the grace of baptism or granted the knowledge and assistance of the law. Let us also thank Him for these which are conferred on us by His daily providence, namely, that He free us from the plots of the adversaries, cooperates on our behalf so we can suppress the vices of the flesh, protects us even we do not know it from dangers, keeps us from falling into sin, helps and enlightens us so we are able to recognise and understand this very help of ours (which some want to be understood as nothing other than the law); that we are secretly made contrite at His inspiration for our negligent and delinquent acts, we are reproved by the most healing condescension of His visitation, we are drawn to salvation by Him even when we are unwilling sometimes, since lastly He redirects our very free will, which is readily inclined to vice, to better moral performance

¹⁵⁸ Cassian, *inst* 2.16, *conl* 7.8.3

¹⁵⁹ Cassian, *inst* 5.28, cf. 12.32.2

¹⁶⁰ Cassian, *inst* 12.9-10; cf. *conl* 3.14-15.4. Note also Cassian's use of Rom. 9.16: *conl* 4.5.

¹⁶¹ Cf. Cassian, *conl* 9.20, 9.34.8-9

¹⁶² Cf. Cassian, *conl* 11.8.2-3

¹⁶³ E.g., Christ is proactive in his desire for our salvation, even 'pulling out the occasions of wrath from our hearts by the roots'; Cassian, *inst* 8.14.

(*frugem*) and twists it toward the path of virtue by the prompting of His visitation.¹⁶⁴

This paragraph is characteristic not only of Cassian's early thought, but even of his later thought as well. There is not much need for intellectual development to account for the author of this passage writing the famous (or notorious) *Conference* 13. Already we find here, amongst the numerous ways God protects us, an assertion that God cooperates with us. Typical, also, is Cassian's effort to retain both the priority of God's gracious dealings with us and the responsibility we all bear for our actions. To maintain such a position, Cassian must be quite clear that God does not act upon us in such a way as to jeopardise our responsibility for our actions. Pelagius could entertain all of this, if he were in an expansive mood, though probably the Sicilian would have balked at the call for thankfulness at being preserved from we know not what. (That does have a simpering ring to it, after all.)¹⁶⁵ But Cassian has more to say. At his bidding, we are to thank God for converting our wills, and thus drawing us, unwilling, to salvation. In saying this, Cassian intensifies his earlier account both of the will's inconstancy and of God's ability to intervene.¹⁶⁶

And he does so in a polemic way. About half way through, Cassian's catalogue of blessings shifts abruptly from using active, third person, singular verbs to describe

¹⁶⁴ Cassian, *inst* 12.18: 'Non solum pro his ei gratias referentes, quod uel rationabiles nos condidit uel liberi arbitrii potestate donauit uel baptismi largitus est gratiam uel scientiam legis adiutoriumque concessit, sed etiam pro his, quae erga nos cotidiana eius prouidentia conferuntur, quod scilicet aduersariorum nos insidiis liberat, quod cooperatur in nobis, ut carnis uitia superare possimus, quod a periculis nos etiam ignorantes protegit, quod a lapsu peccati communit, quod adiuuat nos et inluminat, ut ipsum adiutorium nostrum, quod non aliud quidam interpretari uolunt quam legem, intellegere et agnoscere ualeamus, quod pro neglegentiis delictisque nostris eius inspiratione latenter compungimur, quod dignatione eius uisitati saluberrime castigamur, quod ab eo nonnumquam etiam inuiti trahimur ad salutem, postremo quia ipsum liberum arbitrium nostrum, quod procliuius fertur ad uitia, ad meliorem dirigit frugem et ad uirtutum uiam instigationis suae uisitatione contorquet.' Cf. *conl* 13.7.3-8.1, 13.9.1, 13.17.1-2, 13.18.2-3.

¹⁶⁵ But when it next occurs, the context is altogether heroic: Cassian, *conl* 13.14.9.

¹⁶⁶ In his important discussion of 'La inhabitación de Cristo', Codina notes, (Codina 1966), p. 69, 'Solo Dios puede unirse intimamente con el alma, ya que solo Dios es incorpóreo. [...] Solo la Trinidad puede

God's actions (*condidit, donauit, largitus est, concessit, liberat, cooperatur, protegit, communit, adiuuat et inluminat*) to using passive, first person, plural verbs (*conpungimur, castigamur, trahimur*). This shift draws our attention to the last way God acts upon us (before the first way we are acted upon by God), which is this: God 'helps and enlightens us so we are able to recognise and understand this very help of ours (which some want to be understood as nothing other than the law)'. All that follows expands on this by explaining how God acts internally upon us. But the force of the parenthetical remark is distinctly anti-Pelagian and it recalls Augustine's exasperated complaint that the Pelagians 'are unwilling for grace to appear to be anything but the law'.¹⁶⁷ Now because in the *Institutes* Cassian twice addresses himself to Bishop Castor, Petschenig set the probable dates of composition to c. 419-426; this means that the first salvos in the controversy between Pelagius and Jerome had been fired long since and that the battle between Augustine and the Pelagians was really heating up when Cassian wrote this chapter.¹⁶⁸ So Cassian himself enters the fray with this thinly veiled rejection of Pelagianism. He follows this up with a toothed analysis of God's grace, and the teeth are Cassian's firm declaration that the will is readily disposed to vice and his affirmation that God is capable of interfering with the operation of the will. These propositions are diametrically opposed to fundamental tenets of Pelagian theology.

penetrar el alma, no solo abarcarla y ceñirla, sino infundirse e introducirse en ella.' This observation can help us understand how Cassian understood God's transformation of the will to take place.

¹⁶⁷ Augustine, *c. duas epp Pel* 4.11.30 (CSEL 60.563.8-9): '... gratiam, quam diuersis locutionibus Pelagiani nolunt nisi legem uideri'; cf. *grat et pecc or* 1.10.11 (CSEL 42.133-135). Alard de Gazet noted this similarity: PL 49.455.

¹⁶⁸ (Petschenig 1886-1888), 2.x. By 419, Pelagius already had been examined in Diospolis (415); condemned by the African bishops in Milevis (416) and by Pope Innocent (417); excommunicated by Pope Zosimus (418); and, together with Caelestius, expelled from Rome (418). Julian's first work appeared around this time (419). Brown provides a helpful tabular chronology of the Pelagian controversy: (Brown 2000), pp. 280-283.

Before proceeding to the other works, a word of caution is appropriate. We have observed that Cassian's dismissive remark fits the contemporary debate between Pelagius and the Pelagians on the one hand and Augustine and Jerome on the other. Force of scholarly habit might dispose us now to align Cassian to Augustinianism and measure him by those standards – but any such inclination should be resisted. Scholars have corrected the slovenly habit of thinking of Pelagianism as a theological monolith, citing the diversity of views comprehended within the Pelagian movement. For similar reasons, we should be extremely wary of oversimplifying the rejection of Pelagianism. A ready example is the case of Jerome. Evans has made a serious case for Jerome's enormous influence in the early stages of the controversy as an objector to Pelagius. But because Jerome refuted Pelagius, is he therefore an Augustinian? Hardly. Just as it is unreasonable to assimilate Jerome to Augustine, so too is it unreasonable to assimilate Cassian to Augustine: Augustine did not have an exclusive claim on right belief.

More than that, it is historically imprudent to conflate Cassian's view and Augustine's because doing so will inescapably cause Cassian's thoughts on the subject to be eclipsed, as the far more numerous works by Augustine overwhelm our attention. The debate about Pelagius' reforms was not a bilateral contest between Pelagius and Augustine. It involved many other parties. Thanks to Prosper's eager campaign of defending Augustine's memory, we are well aware that Cassian for his part was not an Augustinian in any meaningful sense of the term. But, to reiterate a theme, he need not have been in order to resist Pelagianism. Furthermore, his apparent objections to Augustinian theology are topical and infrequent. This is in contrast to his objections to

Pelagianism, which run right through his writings, sometimes in unlikely places. And that means that his differences with Augustine were, by comparison, superficial.

- How the will dysfunctions: the anti-Pelagian thrust

By the time Cassian began writing his *Conferences*, the Pelagian controversy was well under way¹⁶⁹ – and Cassian had already weighed in on the debates against Pelagianism. So it is noteworthy that from the first *Conference* Cassian reiterates and refines his claim that God, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, ‘reveals to us the heavenly sacraments and turns our will and way of life to better acts.’¹⁷⁰ In *Conference* 3, he goes on to flesh out the principles already sketched in the *Institutes* with stories of the great abbas of the desert. Thus, with the charming story of a roguish novice who at night secretly ate a biscuit he would daily steal from the table, Cassian emphasises the complicity of the will in disobedience,¹⁷¹ and with the edifying account of Paphnutius’ youth, Cassian once more extols the value of obedience and mortifying one’s own will.¹⁷² Cassian touts Moses as an outstanding exemplar of proceeding from conversion to perfection through offering voluntary sacrifices to God.¹⁷³ And going to the Bible, Cassian refers to St Paul’s conversion as an instance of God converting the unwilling to

¹⁶⁹ Again, basing his claim on the dates of Castor’s episcopacy, Petschenig dates the beginning of the *Conferences* to ‘before 426... but not before 419’: (Petschenig 1886-1888), p. XI.

¹⁷⁰ Cassian, *conl* 1.19.1. It is not clear from the context what the *caelestia sacramenta* are, but the context is Evagrius (cf. Evagrius, *orat* 62), so perhaps Cassian has in mind contemplation of the mysteries of creation.

¹⁷¹ Cassian, *conl* 2.11.1

¹⁷² Cassian, *conl* 3.1.2; cf. 4.21.4

¹⁷³ Cassian, *conl* 3.5.2

Himself.¹⁷⁴ (Cassian also chillingly claims that Satan can similarly infiltrate our minds and ‘unknowing or unwilling, we are drawn from our best intentions.’)¹⁷⁵ This is preliminary to Cassian’s *tour de force*: he baldly asserts that God’s grace, not human free will, is responsible for ‘everything which pertains to salvation’ – even faith.¹⁷⁶ And he even adds a justification for affirming all this while maintaining the validity of God’s judgment, which can be taken as an effort to supplant Pelagian thinking entirely: Cassian would have his cake in the form of God’s overriding sovereignty, and eat it, too, in the guise of human responsibility.¹⁷⁷ All this is still firmly anchored in the typically monastic warnings against pride Cassian issued in the *Institutes*, and it is further secured to the Evagrian tradition by Cassian’s reference to abandonment by God.¹⁷⁸ And Cassian gives Paphnutius the last word in the discussion when Paphnutius corrects Germanus’ hasty assertion of free will by chastising anyone who, in defending free will, ‘would try to take away from man the daily grace and providence of God’¹⁷⁹ – a criticism that Pelagianism deprives Christians of God’s grace.

¹⁷⁴ Cassian, *conl* 3.5.4; cf. *conl* 7.8.2, 13.9.1, 13.15.2, 13.18.2. However, Cassian also reports Chaeremon’s view that unwilling people are unstable; this diminishes their prospects of salvation considerably: *conl* 11.8.2-3; cf. 23.12.4. Stability derives from conforming to the will of God: *conl* 12.6.8.

¹⁷⁵ Cassian, *conl* 4.3: ‘De inpugnatione uero diaboli, cum etiam bonis nonnumquam studiis dediti callida subtilitate mentem nostrum aduersario penetrante uel ignorantes ab optimis intentionibus abstrahimur uel inuiti.’ Cf. Isaac’s description of ‘being drawn most unwillingly to desire for these things’, *conl* 10.10.6. But note Moses’ caveat regarding demonic influence, *conl* 1.17.1, and Theodore’s Stoic claim that a holy person cannot be harmed unwillingly, *conl* 6.4.1 – for which he finds a convenient example in Job. This is a topic that Serenus discusses at length because of Germanus’ disquiet about it: *conl* 7.9-28.

¹⁷⁶ Cassian, *conl* 3.16.1. He goes so far as to suggest that God grants persistence ‘omni uolenti’, *conl* 9.34.4. To understand this as ‘name it and claim it’ spirituality we would have to forget deliberately the ascetic transformation of the will that is a persistence feature of Cassian’s writings.

¹⁷⁷ See Cassian, *conl* 3.19

¹⁷⁸ See Cassian, *conl* 3.20.1; cf. (Driscoll 1997)

¹⁷⁹ Cassian, *conl* 3.22.1; he goes further at *conl* 5.15.2-3, citing Deut. 9.4-5 to the effect that it is clear scriptural testimony ‘contra perniciosam opinionem praesumptionemque nostrum, qua totum quod agimus uel libero arbitrio uel nostrae uolumus industriae deputare’.

Cassian's *Conference* 4 centres on Abba Daniel's explication of Gal. 5.17.¹⁸⁰ Daniel reproves Germanus for failing to see that St Paul teaches in this passage 'that we do what we do not want to do.'¹⁸¹ This is of a piece with Cassian's affirmation of the will's debility. After Daniel elaborates on the meanings of 'caro' and 'spiritus', he takes up 'uoluntas' which, he says, occupies 'a rather blameworthy middle position' between the two.¹⁸² It must be born in mind, though, that Daniel speaks of the will of a Christian ascetic – as is clear from his description of the ludicrous compromises the will attempts: 'to practice the humility of Christ without casting off worldly honours, to pursue the simplicity of religion along with secular ambition, to serve Christ with the praise and favour of men'.¹⁸³ This vacillating will is clearly not a will in its natural state, and when we read these things we are justified in taking as read the intervening measures of God that Cassian described earlier. Interestingly, Daniel echoes the Sicilian when he points to the natural checks on unfettered willing and he even goes one better than the Sicilian by noting that we hold the demons and evils spirits to be even 'more detestable' because their evil will is not restrained by the limitations of a physical body!¹⁸⁴

When Cassian comes to retell his discussions with Abba Chaeremon, the will is much in evidence. Chaeremon teaches that even 'any holy person you like' commits small, but nonetheless culpable and reprehensible, faults, 'by word, thought, ignorance, forgetfulness, need, will, or surprise'.¹⁸⁵ Because Cassian comes out strongly against sinlessness,¹⁸⁶ it is interesting that in this context he includes sins of will amongst the

¹⁸⁰ Cassian, *conl* 4.9.1-4.17

¹⁸¹ Cassian, *conl* 4.2

¹⁸² Cassian, *conl* 4.12.1

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Cassian, *conl* 4.13.2

¹⁸⁵ Cassian, *conl* 11.9.6

¹⁸⁶ Cassian, *conl* 23

causes of inevitable sin. This is perfectly consistent with Cassian's line on the instability of the will. Chaeremon also takes the farmer as a metaphor for the Christian monk – just as the farmer's effort is necessary, but insufficient for a good harvest, so too the monk's effort and his will are necessary, but insufficient for salvation.¹⁸⁷ (This is, incidentally, quite at odds with the lessons Pelagius draws from the farmer, who is a model for hard work and satisfaction at the fruits of his labour.)¹⁸⁸ If any doubts remained about the origin of a good will, Chaeremon dispatches them: 'Wherefore the source of not only good acts, but even good thoughts is clearly inferred to be from God, who also inspires in us the beginnings of a good will and provides the strength and opportunity for us to complete those things which we rightly desire to do.'¹⁸⁹ Moreover, he attributes to God's grace not only the propitious disposal of external circumstance, but even the proper ordering of internal desires.¹⁹⁰ It is therefore clear that Chaeremon and Cassian are prepared to accept a high level of divine intervention within the very soul of the monk – something that is unacceptable in principle for Pelagians.

Then Chaeremon embarks on the deep waters of controversy. He claims that God's 'kindness, when it observes even the tiniest spark of good will spring up in us, or which He Himself struck from the hard flint of our heart, supports it and kindles it and strengthens it by his inspiration'.¹⁹¹ The innocuous disjunctive *uel* is all-important in the history of the controversy about Cassian. Though it is not as decisive as *aut*,¹⁹²

¹⁸⁷ Cassian, *conl* 13.3

¹⁸⁸ Pelagius, *Dem* 28 (PL 33.1119); at *uit chr* 8 (PL 50.391), Pelagius likens the farmer tilling the earth to God preparing the chosen people by means of divine commandments.

¹⁸⁹ Cassian, *conl* 13.3.5

¹⁹⁰ Cassian, *conl* 13.6.5

¹⁹¹ Cassian, *conl* 13.7.1: 'Cuius benignitas cum bonae uoluntatis in nobis quantulamcumque scintillam emicuisse perspexerit uel quam ipse tamquam de dura silice nostri cordis excuderit, confouet eam et exsuscitat suaque inspiratione confortat...'; cf. *conl* 13.8.4.

¹⁹² (Gildersleeve 1997), § 495-496, pp. 309-310

nonetheless with it Chaeremon introduces the possibility of good will springing up in us apart from God. To be anxious that Cassian would endorse holiness apart from God is to make a crass misjudgement: the whole of Cassian's advice for coping with pride tends to nothing else than a constant emphasis of man's dependence on God. And it is important to recall Cassian's expectation that the readers of the *Conferences* will have already familiarised themselves with the practices set down in the *Institutes*.¹⁹³ That does not mean that Cassian is talking to insiders and so we are obliged to suspend any disagreements if we are to make sense of the passage; but it does mean that by the time Cassian writes these fateful lines, he will already have the expectation that his readership (if it is at all faithful to him as a spiritual guide) will have put into practice the earlier instructions. In other words, here and in the other problematic passages about the will and the need for grace,¹⁹⁴ Cassian can reasonably expect his readership to assume a highly specific relationship with God, as delineated in everything he had written up to this point. It will not do to treat *Conference* 13 as an isolated document.¹⁹⁵ So it is largely irrelevant Chaeremon does not explicitly mention the redemption of the naturally good will in his encomium on the kindness of the Creator:¹⁹⁶ Cassian has already addressed himself to the status of the will and pronounced it fallible, inadequate and generally prone to sin (though he will stipulate as the Conference continues that he does not think the will is totally debilitated).¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ Cf. Cassian's approach to teaching about prayer: *inst* 2.9.1, 3 for external practices; *conl* pref. 5 for inner meanings. Readers impatient with the abrupt transition from monastic practice to the deadly sins in the *Institutes* should keep in mind this habitual movement in his thought.

¹⁹⁴ E.g., *conl* 13.9.4-10.4

¹⁹⁵ Cf. (Macqueen 1977)

¹⁹⁶ Cassian, *conl* 13.9.5

¹⁹⁷ Cassian, *conl* 13.12

This reading of *Conference* 13 is satisfactory until we come upon Chaeremon's critical remarks about those 'who believe one (claim about the origins of good will) alone and assert it more than is just' and are consequently 'wrapped up in a variety of self-contradictory mistakes'.¹⁹⁸ He expresses dissatisfaction with too much emphasis on the divine origin of the good will on the one hand and with too much emphasis on the human origin of good will on the other. Now it would be out of character for Cassian to wrap himself up in abstract discussions, so we are motivated to identify the groups Chaeremon denounced. In the first case, probably Cassian has in mind people of Prosper's ilk – admirers of Augustine with a bad case of tunnel vision; and in the second, probably Cassian intends to rebut the same people he has denounced throughout his works for Pelagian tendencies. But it is notable that Chaeremon expresses his misgivings about the radical solutions proffered for this problem by anticipating Abelard's *Sic et non*: Chaeremon lays out mutually contradictory scriptures with respect to the question under discussion.¹⁹⁹ Like Abelard, Chaeremon and Cassian make no attempt to adjudicate the dispute after they set it forth. Unlike Abelard, who arguably did so in order to undermine appeals to authority by showing that authorities can be adduced for any proposition, Chaeremon and Cassian are motivated by a desire to suspend judgment; in any event, particular cases are more relevant in their view than are trends or abstractions. They are therefore content to insist on the cooperation of God and man, so as to preserve 'the rule of the Church's faith',²⁰⁰ without arriving at a satisfactory solution to the dilemma. Chaeremon does not push a solution to the problem, but merely sounds a few warnings;

¹⁹⁸ Cassian, *conl* 13.11.1

¹⁹⁹ Cassian, *conl* 13.11.1-4; Abelard, *sic et non* (PL 178.1339-1610)

this does not constitute a *volte-face* by Cassian and it does not necessitate a revision of our working hypothesis about his understanding of the will. While Cassian makes it clear that he can envisage ‘sparks’ of good will that are not directly caused by God, he insists that these sparks are hopelessly inadequate and that direct divine intervention is needed for any real progress. Only one significant qualification of Cassian’s perspective is advanced in this Conference: whereas we have found Cassian to endorse God’s ability to override free will, in this Conference he says God cannot *eliminate* free will.²⁰¹ This safeguards the attribution of responsibility, but it is scarcely a concession to Pelagianism.

- The *homo assumptus*: a paradigm of God’s grace

In his third book, Cassian has little to say directly about the will, but he does consolidate a number of disparate observations about the will with respect to Christ that we have seen in his ‘monastic works.’ It will be recalled that Cassian means for the monk to crucify his will, and in so doing follow Christ. Cassian stresses that Christ denied His own will, and that Christian monks must do likewise. The Christian will then be able to offer ‘voluntary sacrifices’ to God, just as Christ did. It is particularly noteworthy that Cassian has no patience for reducing Christ to a role model for Christians, which is exactly what he accuses the Pelagians of having done.²⁰² Cassian strangely links this to his claim that Pelagius believed Christ to have been a ‘mere

²⁰⁰ Cassian, *conl* 13.11.4. Certainly, Augustine was likewise interested in preserving grace and freedom: e.g., *ep* 214.2, 7 (CSEL 57.381-382, 386-387); but, like Chaeremon and Cassian, our concerns are elsewhere at the moment and we need not judge the adequacy of Augustine’s solution.

²⁰¹ Cassian, *conl* 13.18.5

²⁰² Cassian, *inc* 6.14. This may not be entirely accurate, but it is certainly an understandable impression to take away from reading Pelagius and others; cf. Pelagius, *uirg* 15, (Halm 1866), pp. 245).

mortal.’²⁰³ This is strange first because we have no evidence that Pelagius thought so (although the possibility ought to be left open that Cassian is attributing to Pelagius what local admirers of Pelagius are advocating), and second because Pelagius instead frequently uses the same phrase Cassian uses to describe the humanity of Christ: *homo assumptus*.²⁰⁴ That term has a motley history. It is broadly, but not exclusively, associated with Origenism²⁰⁵ and it ultimately fell out of favour with the condemnation of Theodore of Mopsuestia’s Christology.²⁰⁶ Probably Cassian’s frequent use of this suspicious phrase accounts for its comparatively pathetic circulation²⁰⁷ and contributes to the general disdain most scholars express for this work.²⁰⁸ In any case, Cassian’s contempt for the inadequate Christology of Pelagius is readily comprehensible in light of Cassian’s less optimistic expectations of human will. People require more than a good example or a good teacher, on Cassian’s view, because proper motivation does not guarantee the desired results.

Because of his recourse to the *homo assumptus*, Cassian can talk of Christ Himself receiving grace along with divinity.²⁰⁹ He makes this point to rebut putative

²⁰³ Cassian, *inc* 6.14

²⁰⁴ Cassian: *inst* 12.17; *conl* 7.22, 9.34.10, 16.6.4, 22.12.1; *inc* 1.2.5, 1.5.4, 2.3.10, 2.6.1, 5.6.3; cf. 5.12.1, 7.22.2-3; Pelagius: *lib fid* 4-5, 11 (PL 45.1717-1718), *leg diu* 1 (PL 30.105), *exp Rom* 8.34; (Souter 1926), p. 70.6.

²⁰⁵ E.g., Origen, *Clo* 1.28.30.191-192, (Blanc 1966-1992), 1.154-156; Apponius, *CCt* 3.3, 5.32, 9.47, 12.12, 12.46, 12.50, (de Vregille 1986), pp. 61, 130, 233, 273, 288, 290; and cf. Evagrius, in *Pss* 44.8ζ, 88.78, 104.15ι, 118.3β; but see also Hilary of Poitiers, *Trin* 1.11, 13, 16, 2.25 *et passim* (PL 10.33-34, 36, 67) and Augustine, *epp* 137.2.6, 137.4.14, 140.3.9, 148.2.10, 148.4.15, 169.2.8, 187.13.39-40, 238.3.18 (CSEL 44.103-105, 116-117, 161, 340-341, 344-345, 617; 57.116-118, 546-547), *uer rel* 17.33.89 (CSEL 77(2).24), *Gn litt* 8.27.50, 10.18.32-33, 10.20.36-21.37 (CSEL 28(1).265-267, 319-321, 322-326, *gest Pel* 14.32 (CSEL 42.87.24-88.4), *an et or* 2.5.9 (CSEL 60.342-343), *praed sanct* 15.30 (PL 44.982), *preseu* 24.66 (PL 45.1033). Unfortunately, I have not had access to (Diepen 1963-1964).

²⁰⁶ Theodore, *hom cat* 5.11, 19 (Tanneau 1949), pp. 114-117, 126-127; *inc* 7 (Swete 1880-1882), 2.296.27-31. Theodore was condemned at Constantinople II (553); see esp. *can* 12-13, (Straub 1971), pp. 218-219.

²⁰⁷ Cf. (Petschenig 1886-1888), 1.xiii.

²⁰⁸ Before Victor Codina’s admirable study of Cassian’s Christology, only one modern publication on the subject is known to me: (Déodat de Basly 1928), P. Déodat de Basly’s curious attempt to vindicate *homo assumptus* Christology.

²⁰⁹ Cassian, *inc* 2.6.1

adoptionist tendencies in Nestorius, but the point has broader implications. Cassian repeatedly affirmed that Nestorianism and Pelagianism are two sides of the same coin.²¹⁰ Recalling this affirmation, we may ask whether Cassian's assertion that Christ received divine grace as well as deity has any bearing on his case against the Pelagians. In the monastic works, Cassian showed great interest in how monks ought to emulate Christ, not least in abjuring their wills, and he also showed great interest in how God graciously shores up the inadequate human will. Traces of anti-Pelagianism are evident at various points in Cassian's discussion. Thus, we can justifiably speak of a latent disposition to reject Pelagianism in Cassian's works. Furthermore, the similarity of Cassian's use of the *homo assumptus* against Nestorians to Augustine's use of the *homo assumptus* against Pelagians is striking.²¹¹ All of this suggests it would be no injustice to Cassian for us to see in his reference to the *homo assumptus* a strong denunciation of Pelagianism.

- An assessment of Cassian's objections

How fair in the end was Cassian's argument against Pelagius and his fellows? To their credit, they espoused a broadly sacramental view of salvation that belies Cassian's insinuation about the Pelagian Christ being merely a teacher. And yet the presumptions about the will consistent for all the Pelagians are diametrically opposite to Cassian's teaching on the will. Cassian began his teaching with the need for humility and obedience in the monastery. But he went beyond the practicalities of monastic life to

²¹⁰ Cassian, *inc* 1.3.3-4.2; 5.2.1-2; 6.14.1-2; 7.21.4; cf. 2.1.1-2. Cassian was not alone in perceiving this connection. Both Augustine and Prosper also connected the two; see (Plagnieux 1956). This claim had impressive staying power: even Photius relates it, *cod* 54, (Henry 1959-1991), 1.42.

expose the reasons humility and obedience are necessary. When he did that, the results were uniform: Cassian was a tireless critic of the will. He leaves his reader to understand that man is not meant to live in splendid isolation from God and that even the will – that strong citadel of the Pelagians – is grossly incompetent and in constant need of divine support and correction.

We have seen, then, that Cassian gradually develops a teaching about the will according to which the will is highly defective and must be healed so that it can be controlled. Furthermore, Cassian taught that God brings about this healing. He takes Christ Himself as the archetype for this process: Christ not only sets a good example for us to emulate, He also provides a theological basis for claiming that divine grace is necessary at all levels for the Christian life. This grace intervenes in the Christian life by arranging circumstances to the advantage of Christians (even when the circumstances appear disadvantageous), but even more by reordering the Christians' will. Because Cassian taught these things about the will, there would have been very little common ground for him and the Pelagians. And in fact as Cassian works out this teaching, he periodically inserts into his writings comments that indicate his opposition to Pelagianism. This means in the end that, much as we saw a diverse band of Pelagians who shared a common cause in preaching Christian reform, Cassian takes his place in a diverse band of anti-Pelagians who shared a common cause in objecting to the theological dangers of Pelagianism.

- A note on the purpose (and dating) of *Conference 13*

²¹¹ E.g., Augustine, *gest Pel* 14.31 (CSEL 42.85-86), *praed sanct* 15.30 (PL 44.982). For Christology in the Pelagian controversy, see (Dewart 1982); for Pelagius' Christology, see (Greshake 1972), pp. 125-134.

The argument of this chapter, that across his career Cassian was concertedly and even polemically anti-Pelagian, has an important consequence for how we read Cassian's *Conference* 13. Sir Owen Chadwick noted more than fifty years ago that the standard chronology of the Pelagian controversy does not allow sufficient time for Cassian to respond to Augustine's *de correptione et gratia* in his *Conference* 13.²¹² The problem comes down to the fact that *Conference* 13 and the rest of the second installment of the *Conferences* are dedicated to Honoratus 'frater', that is, to Honoratus before he became bishop of Arles (the 'beatus episcopus' mentioned in the third installment of the *Conferences*), c. 426. In other words, Cassian wrote *Conference* 13 about three years before Augustine's writings began to stir up the controversies reported in Prosper's letter to Augustine, c. 428-429.²¹³ Unless we are willing to suppose that Cassian was prescient, Chadwick suggested, something has to give.

Chadwick offered an ingenious solution. He proposed an emendation to the standard chronology of the bishops of Arles for the years 426-430, arguing that a certain Euladius was bishop from 426 to late 427-early 428. Manipulating the dates in this way allows Chadwick to defer Honoratus' episcopate until c. 428-429, thereby allowing Cassian's treatises dedicated to him to be a response to Augustine – or, as Chadwick put it, 'an act within the theological crisis' of those years.²¹⁴ The argument is ingenious, based on a MS variant in Prosper's letter to Augustine, and carrying the considerable weight of a much earlier endorsement by Tillemont. But it is unnecessary. Chadwick generates the problem for which the episcopate of 'Euladius' is his answer on the strength

²¹² (Chadwick 1945)

²¹³ This letter is preserved in Augustine's corpus of letters: Augustine, *ep* 225 (PL 44.947-952).

of his interpretation of *Conference* 13 as ‘a controversial piece of writing containing Cassian’s famous opposition to Augustine upon the predestinarian controversy’.²¹⁵ On the basis of what we have seen, we can counter that Cassian’s famous opposition was actually to Pelagianism. Cassian was in good company: denouncing Pelagianism was an activity that brought many in Gaul together, an activity on which they could lavish their energies. We should recall that Heros and Lazarus, who were Pelagius’ accusers at the council of Diospolis in 412, were formerly bishops of Arles and Aix, respectively; and it has been persuasively argued that their opposition to Pelagius came before they were driven out of their sees into the East.²¹⁶ So we can cut the Gordian knot: Cassian was not ‘responding’ to Augustine’s writings at all, he was instead taking part in the Gallic resistance to Pelagianism.

The anti-Pelagian trends that recur right across Cassian’s writings are particularly dense in *Conference* 13; it is the notoriously anti-Augustinian claims that are unusual. They do not recur, for example, when Cassian returns to the question of grace and freedom in *Conference* 23. The bits in *Conference* 13 that agitated Prosper are in fact peripheral to the primary thrust of Cassian’s dialogue. They amount to a clarification of his major argument, whereby Cassian insists that divine intervention eliminates neither free will nor responsibility. So when we try to make sense of *Conference* 13, our attention ought to be devoted to the preponderate objections to Pelagius, rather than the incidental corrections of Augustine – if that is what they are. But more will need to be said on that point momentarily.

²¹⁴ (Chadwick 1945), p. 201.

²¹⁵ (Chadwick 1945), p. 201.

²¹⁶ See (Mathisen 1989), pp. 37-41.

At present, let us note that if the interpretation of *Conference* 13 as primarily anti-Pelagian is accepted, there is no need for Chadwick to emend the chronology of bishops so that it ‘fits its subject matter’;²¹⁷ it already does. Its subject matter is the on-going resistance to Pelagian preaching. Chadwick’s observations on the MS variant in Prosper’s letter notwithstanding, there is no reason to conjecture an ephemeral episcopacy for an otherwise unknown figure: the traditional chronologies for the see of Arles; the correspondence of Augustine and Prosper; and the writings of Cassian are not bedevilled by the problem Chadwick claimed to have found.

But what of the unmistakable, heated rejections of propositions that strike us as roundly Augustinian?²¹⁸ If we reject Chadwick’s arguments, we must be prepared to accept what he could not: that the ‘controversial piece of writing containing Cassian’s famous opposition to Augustine’ was written c. 426, *before* the reactions to Augustine began in earnest. To accept this is to accept the burden of explaining where Cassian got the ideas to which he objects so decisively. We can ease that burden somewhat by noting that in fact Cassian never quotes Augustine’s *On admonition and grace*;²¹⁹ and that we have only ‘a strong presumption’, in Chadwick’s admirable phrase,²²⁰ that he was objecting to that treatise in particular. I believe we must weaken that presumption. All that we find in *Conference* 13 are paraphrases approximating to an Augustinian view. An approximation does not make for a decisive rejection. If Cassian in fact intended to chip away at Augustine, why did he not quote the offending treatise without acknowledging

²¹⁷ (Chadwick 1945), p. 201.

²¹⁸ E.g., Cassian, *conl* 13.11.1, cited at p. 246 fn. 198, above.

²¹⁹ The passages in Cassian that seem closest to direct responses to Augustine are Cassian, *conl* 13.7 (contrast Augustine, *corrupt* 14.44: on the availability of salvation); and *conl* 13.11 (contrast to Augustine, *pec mer* 1.16.31, 1.23.33: on the fate of unbaptised infants). But, at the risk of being tedious, these are at best paraphrases of Augustine.

²²⁰ (Chadwick 1945), p. 202.

his source?²²¹ Even though the view Cassian rejects certainly resembles the view Augustine propounds,²²² in the absence of further evidence we can justifiably refrain from presuming that Cassian was responding to Augustine. The argument that he was doing so is logically flawed: *similis huic, ergo propter hoc*.

Even if it is not especially gratifying to conjecture a non-literary source (it is always more enjoyable to uncover texts behind texts behind texts...), we might account for Cassian's barbed remarks by conjecturing that he was responding to unwritten ideas current amongst his peers. Prosper of Aquitaine may well have had likeminded fellows, disseminating and discussing their version of Augustinian theology. For rather different reasons, Prof. R. A. Markus has already urged us to resist the tendency to read *Conference* 13 'in the perspective of the "semi-Pelagian" controversy',²²³ suggesting instead that it may well have been part of a discussion of topical ideas that preceded the arrival of Augustine's controversial writing. Added support in favour of a non-literary target for Cassian's objections can be taken from the previous observation that the 'famous opposition to Augustine' is extremely localised in Cassian's works. Though both of them basically treat the same themes treated in *Conference* 13, this famous opposition occurs in neither *Conference* 3 nor 23. Let us note that the former was written well after Augustine's treatise to Sixtus that grieved the monks of Hadrumetum,²²⁴ while the latter was written well after *On admonition and grace* had begun to circulate in Cassian's region. If Cassian were aiming to eradicate the theological legacy of Augustine's writings, he would not have suddenly taken up and just as suddenly left off

²²¹ There is a classic example of unacknowledged quotation in Cassian's *conl* 10.14.1 (cf. Evagrius, *prak* 15); see p. 162 fn. 246, above.

²²² See p. 253 fn. 218, above.

²²³ (Markus 1990b), p. 178.

his campaign. Since there is no evidence for such a campaign, we would do well to reconsider any predispositions toward finding anti-Augustinian sentiment just around every corner in Cassian's works.²²⁵ Again, since there is no evidence for such a campaign, it is likely that the concentrated vehemence of Cassian's refutation is a measured response to a local eruption of objectionable theology.

- Conclusions

The lessons we can take from this are many. In the first place, Cassian was a committed critic of the Pelagians' doctrine of the will. Secondly, his criticisms rested upon his principles of asceticism. Third, he was not prepared to allow arguments to strip humans of their responsibility in order to give greater glory to God – precisely because this would undermine the ascetic imperative of Christianity. Prosper informed Augustine, and so informs us, that some of Augustine's writings were read precisely in this way by his peers, of whom Cassian was one. Despite this, there is no literary evidence that Cassian's *Conference* 13 was designed as a rebuttal of Augustine's *On admonition and grace*; and in fact Cassian's work is the earlier writing of the two, by the standard chronology. Furthermore, when Cassian returns to the controversial topics in *Conference* 23, he provides no further evidence of preoccupation with Augustinian themes, although an anti-Augustinian disclaimer would have been completely natural

²²⁴ See the discussion at pp. 180-183, above.

²²⁵ A particularly perverse example of this process in action is the conventional discussion of Cassian, *inc* 7.27; see (Casiday 2001a).

there.²²⁶ This does not mean Cassian was an Augustinian. But it does mean that he did not devote his energy to the tasks for which Prosper blasted him: undermining Augustine, introducing Pelagianism by the backdoor and generally fomenting disquiet. Instead, Cassian was preoccupied with a different, ascetic task: cultivating a kind of humility inconsistent with Pelagian preaching.

²²⁶ For instance, the encomium on grace at Cassian, *conl* 23.10.1-2, cries out for qualifications – if Cassian is indeed preoccupied with opposing Augustine.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis has been a re-evaluation of John Cassian's writings for their theological value. Because this question is in essence a very old one, I have opted to keep this enquiry within the broad parameters already in place. In other words, the principle theme to which much of this research has returned is how Cassian accounts for God's relationship to man – grace. But, in an effort to advance a discussion that in my view stalled out centuries ago, it has seemed good to pursue this research without being restricted to a narrow discussion of controversial subjects like grace and freedom. Consequently, this thesis has focused on topics that are tangentially related as Cassian presents them. Such are the chapters on dreams and on prayer. Along with this fresh approach to the old problem, in this thesis I have advanced the proposition that Cassian is a theologian of profundity and creativity. The creativity evident in Cassian's works must be understood within the framework of patristic theology. The application of traditional teaching to new circumstances is and must be a creative act. This is to be distinguished from innovation, which for someone like Cassian is pariah.

To appreciate the ways in which Cassian creatively transmitted his teaching, the thesis has explored his relationship to Evagrius Ponticus and to Augustine of Hippo. Each of them is a theologian of legendary significance. But some of the legendary bits may be unhelpful, so I have undertaken some revision in dealing with their works. Specifically, with respect to Evagrius, an abundance of his writings has recently become available and this alone justifies a new interpretation. Here I am not breaking new ground. But applying this work to the study of Cassian, e.g., by drawing out its

implications for how Cassian presents the monks in his writings, is a development. With respect to Augustine, once more this thesis is not pioneering for addressing Augustine's monasticism; but it does introduce a new development by asking what relevance that might have for the way in which we read the documents of the Pelagian controversy, in which (I have argued) Cassian consciously played a part.

Although this project can be said to have come to a conclusion, in that the topics for discussion as listed in the introduction have been treated, the task of re-evaluating Cassian as a theologian is only beginning. For a start, even though I have made a concerted effort to resist being overly influenced by the traditional categories employed for criticising Cassian, I have nonetheless felt the need to redress them. This means that the project of assessing Cassian's theology as a whole and on his own terms has yet to be attempted. Furthermore, a number of further questions present themselves at the conclusion of this work. For instance, is it legitimate for Cassian to claim that what we now call Origenism was available to Egyptian monks without prejudice to their intellectual levels? The answer to this question bears on what we make of the first Origenist controversy. As for semi-Pelagianism, even if Cassian can be exonerated from those charges, what are we to make of contemporary and subsequent events in Gaul? Here, the question can be helpfully posed in terms that are, again, drawn from convention but that ought not be allowed to limit the answers sought: those events are a good way of understanding what, if anything, Augustinism was in the generations after the great saint's death. The list of further questions that can be put to Cassian is potentially endless. And this, I think, is a testament to his greatness: the works have not only enduring spiritual value, but enduring theological value as well.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACO: Acta Conciliorum Œcumenicorum

CCL: Corpus Christianorum Scriptorum Latinorum

CSCO: Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium

CSEL: Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum

DSp: Dictionnaire de Spiritualité

DTC: Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique

GCS: Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller

GNO: Gregorii Nysseni Opera

LCL: Loeb Classical Library

Mus: Le Muséon. Revue d'études orientales

OCA: Orientalia Christiana Analecta

OCP: Orientalia Christiana Periodica

PG: Patrologia Graeca (see 'Migne, J.-P., ed. 1857-1891', below)

PL: Patrologia Latina (see 'Migne, J.-P., ed. 1878-1890', below)

PO: Patrologia Orientalis

PTS: Patristische Texte und Studien

RAM: Revue d'ascétique et de mystique

SA: Studia Anselmiana

SC: Sources Chrétiennes

SH: Subsidia Hagiographica

SM: Studia Monastica

SO: Spiritualité orientale

SP: Studia Patristica

SVF: Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta (see 'von Arnim 1903-1924', below)

TU: Texte und Untersuchungen

VC: Vigiliae Christianae

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